

THE
F E E L I N G S
OF THE
H E A R T;

OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
OF A
C O U N T R Y G I R L.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,
AND ADDRESSED TO
A L A D Y O F Q U A L I T Y.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

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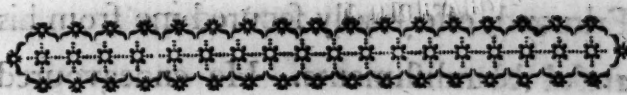
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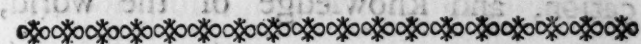
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A Lady of Quality.
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THE
FEELINGS
OF THE
HEART.



LETTER VIII.



Y Lord spared no pains to se-
duce a young unexperienced
heart; but the principles of
virtue, which had, with such unwearied
pains, been instilled into my youthful
mind, together with my passion for Lord

VOL. II.

B

Edmond,

Edmond, effectually secured me from his artful blandishments. He endeavoured to weaken the force of those principles, by all the wit and sophistry he was master of; confounding right and wrong, and bewildering the mind in a maze of error. But though I could not wholly refute his libertine arguments, his education, and knowledge of the world, having given him great advantage over me, in those kind of disputes, in which he was continually engaging me; yet could he not, though he puzzled my reason, succeed in corrupting my heart. He did not, however, despair of making me, ere long, like himself, a willing slave to vice. For this reason, he took care not to alarm my virtue, by attempting

attempting to avail himself of my unhappy situation. He was all respect and tenderness. He artfully endeavoured to insinuate himself into my heart, by his complaisant and engaging behaviour, by omitting nothing in his power that could amuse me, and that might soften my dreary confinement; taking care, however, in the midst of this seeming complaisance, that I should find no possible means to escape, though this project alone engrossed my thoughts.

He found I was fond of music and reading. He played on several instruments in the highest perfection. My closet was furnished with the best authors. In the morning I was suffered to walk in a delightful garden adjoining

ing to the house. Sometimes he would accompany me; and, on these occasions, he sought to dispel my melancholy, by his wit and gaiety. When I would not allow him this favour, as he called it, and never, you may believe, did I permit it without the highest reluctance; he suffered me to wander through the pleasing shades alone. Mrs. Green, it is true, was always ordered to follow at a distance, in order to watch my steps. Yet, why all these cruel precautions? The walls were too high to admit a possibility of escaping that way.

His table was furnished with the greatest delicacies—the richest and most elegant cloaths were provided for me; but I refused to exchange my humble garments

garments for those which were to be the price of my dishonour. Vain were all his remonstrances, his intreaties : I would accept of nothing, except some linen, which necessity compelled me to. I viewed my gaudy wardrobe with virtuous contempt. Mrs. Green had omitted no endeavours to insinuate herself into my good graces. She affected to condemn her master's conduct.

“ I am under high obligations to him,” said she. “ My husband was one of his chaplains. At his death he provided for my poor, dear son, educating him at his own expence, and afterwards gave him a comfortable living. I dare not, therefore, so freely as I wish,

“ express my disapprobation of his con-
“ duct, lest I should thereby lose the
“ only friend I have in the world. He
“ told me, when he brought me to this
“ place, that I was to be house-keeper
“ to a young Lady to whom he was
“ guardian. I soon discovered the false-
“ hood of this story ; but, as I found
“ you virtuous, Madam, I had the less
“ scruple to continue in my place ;
“ since I was determined, as much as
“ lay in my power, to protect you
“ against his snares. Hitherto, you have
“ had no great reason to complain of
“ his behaviour. I conceived a friend-
“ ship for you the first moment I be-
“ held you ; and would, were I the on-
“ ly spy upon your actions, endeavour

“ to

“ to facilitate your escape; but I know
 “ he mistrusts me, so that I am as care-
 “ fully watched as yourself. However,
 “ let us have patience, my sweet young
 “ Lady, some fortunate accident may
 “ yet favour our designs. In the mean
 “ time, ’tis necessary to dissemble, and
 “ to comply with his humour, in every
 “ request that is consistent with inno-
 “ cence. He longs to see you dressed;
 “ there can be no harm in indulging
 “ this whim.”

All this passed one night while I was
 undressing. I had, however, only taken
 off my gown and cap, nor meant to
 proceed farther while she staid. I had
 also taken care to lock the door on our
 entrance.

B 4

“ Come,

"Come, my dear Miss," added she, taking up the things I had thrown off, "I must, in this trifling affair, obey his commands."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Green?"
"For heaven's sake restore me my cloaths. I will not part with those badges of my poverty and innocence. I shall think myself polluted by adorning, or, rather, debasing, myself with his gaudy trappings."

"My dear young Lady, let us not contend with him about such trifles. He is master, and will have his way."

"This action, Mrs. Green, trifling as you think it, has greatly lowered you in my esteem."

"Ridicu-

“ Ridiculous !” (smiling) “ But my
“ future conduct shall reinstate me in
“ your favour.”

In vain I remonstrated ; I was forced
to let her depart with her spoil.

Next morning, necessity conjured me
to make use of his detested presents.
I chose the plainest gown I could find.
It was a white lustring, trimmed with
blond, made in the most fashionable
taste, and exactly fitted to my shape.
I had, hitherto, worn only a neat round-
eared cap, like those of the rural maids,
amongst whom I had passed my peace-
ful childhood, but was now forced to
exchange it for one of the finest blond.
In spite of the virtuous contempt with
which I had beheld these ornaments,

and tho' I had so long resisted the temptation of wearing them, yet, when they were on, and I beheld in the glass how much they improved my charms, vanity got the better of my discretion, and, for some moments, I indulged myself in the pleasing contemplation of my pretty person.

The artful Lord G—— had a thorough knowledge of our sex: he knew how to take advantage of our weakness, knew how natural it was for a young, handsome girl to be fond of finery, and therefore had taken pains to ensnare me by presents suited to my taste. He wished, also, to give me a relish for the superfluous delicacies of life, a relish for grandeur, that I might feel the more reluctance

luctance to descend again to my former humble manner of living. He imagined luxury the most likely to corrupt my heart: this, indeed, is its general tendency; but, thanks to my worthy parents, piety and virtue were too deeply impressed on my mind to be so easily effaced. I had sworn to preserve my virtue, and that neither poverty nor death should shake my firm resolve.

I was hardly dressed when Mrs. Green tapped at my door.—I opened it.—She started back, with well-affected surprise.

“What a change! O Miss, how very
 “handsome you look! You was born to
 “be a fine lady. Your fine cloaths fit
 “so elegantly, so gracefully on you,
 “one would think you had all your life

“been accustomed to them. Such an
“air of graceful dignity! Well may my
“Lord adore you as he does. To be
“sure ’tis very wicked; but were I a man,
“I verily believe I should be tempted to
“play the rogue as well as he.”

“Fy, Mrs. Green, how ill does a
“speech of that kind become a woman
“of your age and gravity!”

“And how much worse,” said she,
laughing, “does that sober morality be-
“come those rosy lips of thine!”

“Good heavens, Mrs. Green, how
“much have I been mistaken in your
“character!”

“Not at all child. Surely, there is no
“harm in innocent mirth? I am of a
“cheerful disposition.—But come, break-
“fast waits.”

“Ah,”

“ Ah,” cried I, “ how little appetite
“ have I for the dainties I am compelled
“ to partake of, and how much would I
“ prefer freedom with content in a cot-
“ tage, tho’ bread and water were to be
“ my only food!”

“ Bread and water, Miss, is but spare
“ diet; and, while my Lord keeps his
“ passion within bounds, in my humble
“ opinion, you are full as well in this
“ little palace as you would be in your
“ dreary cot.”

“ What! Mrs. Green, could you en-
“ joy one moment’s peace, were you,
“ like me, the object of a criminal pas-
“ sion; was your virtue, like mine, con-
“ tinually exposed to danger?”

“ Why,

“ Why, child, how can you help
“ having inspired this same passion? It
“ is nature’s fault who bestowed on you
“ such seducing beauty. You are not to
“ answer for the effects of your charms.
“ As for your virtue you have hitherto
“ preserved it, and my Lord is a man
“ of too much honor and delicacy to
“ make use of force: so, you find, your
“ fate depends upon yourself. I have
“ heard, indeed, that, by the same me-
“ thods he takes with you, he has se-
“ duced those who had both more years
“ and experience than you can boast of.
“ Indeed, his gentleman tells me, he
“ was never yet baulked in any scheme
“ of this kind in which he thought it
“ worth while to engage with spirit. To
“ be

“ be sure, he has been a sad, wicked gentleman to us poor women. Not but
 “ he is generous as a prince, and always
 “ makes handsome provision for his favourites.”

“ My G—d! Mrs. Green, how indulgently you talk of vices! Provision, indeed! Ah, was it in his power
 “ to make any reparation for the injury
 “ he has done them?”

“ That, Miss, is according to the
 “ light in which they viewed the affair.
 “ Some romantic people prefer virtue to
 “ every thing else; tho’, I believe, the
 “ instances of this sort are not very numerous. Others, again, prefer affluence and grandeur to a cottage with
 “ bread

“bread and water. Every woman to
“her mind, you know.”

“I am sorry, Mrs. Green, you have
“destroyed the pleasing illusion. I had
“conceived a high opinion of your pru-
“dence, but you have now shewn your-
“self in your true colours. Alas!”
added I, bursting into tears, “I have
“not one friend in the world!”

“Hey day, Miss, these are fine airs,
“indeed! I would have you to know,
“Madam, I have as much virtue as
“yourself, for all your affected prudery.
“True colours, indeed! What am I to
“be lectured by a child? by a baby?
“You may live to repent your indiscre-
“tion. Such bribes as I have refused!—

“But

“But you shall be your own protector
“for the future. Such harsh construc-
“tions to be put upon a little harmless
“pleasantry! Truly I don’t under-
“stand it.”

Away she flounced.—I did not attempt to detain her, as I found she was one in whom I ought to place no confidence. How, indeed, could I hope that a person of any character would consent to such an employment?—On reflection, however, I was sorry that I had exasperated her; as a wicked woman is the worst of all enemies.

With a very heavy heart did I enter the breakfast-room.—My Lord attempted to take my hand.

“I was

“I was just going,” said he, “to
“dispatch a second messenger to my
“lovely girl.—Why have I been so
“long deprived of your company?
“May I hope that those ornaments en-
“grossed your time and attention? O,
“my sweet Sophia, how dear to my
“heart is this proof of your obliging
“complaisance! Your charms can re-
“ceive no addition, but they are dou-
“bly attractive to your Harry when
“thus arrayed in the gifts of love.”

“And these detested gifts, my Lord,
“humble me even to the dust. But
“do not think my compliance with
“your caprice was voluntary. No, the
“husband of Lady G——, as well as
“his presents, while he continues to
“indulge

“indulge a criminal passion, must be
 “odious to me. Would you wish for
 “my esteem, be my friend, release me
 “from this hated prison: act like a man
 “of honor, and my gratitude shall end
 “but with my life.”

“No more of this, perverse, insen-
 “sible girl! For your own sake, conceal
 “your aversion, lest I should be driven
 “to despair by your cruelty, be com-
 “pelled to make an ungenerous use of
 “my power.”

I wept.

“Dearest Sophia,” continued he,
 “how those tears affect me! Of what
 “have you to complain? Am I not all
 “respectful tenderness? Do I not patient-
 “ly submit to the tormenting distance
 “at

“at which you keep me? Do I attempt
“to avail myself of your situation? Do
“I even solicit any favours but such as
“the purest virtue may grant without a
“blush?”

“Virtue, my Lord, can grant no fa-
“vours to a married man. What then
“can you hope for?”

“It is enough that I see, that I con-
“verse with you. I trust to time, your
“gratitude, and my unabated love.”

“Do not deceive yourself, my Lord.
“I would die rather than forfeit my
“innocence.”

“Well, dear Sophia,” (smiling) “let
“us breakfast; after that you shall par-
“take of an amusement I know is agree-
“able to your taste. Music, my dear
“girl,

“girl, has charms to sooth the savage
“breast, to soften rocks and bend the
“knotted oak.”

“But your Lordship will find that,
“great as the power is which the poet
“ascribes to it, it will never soften my
“heart in your favour.”

“We shall see,” returned he, smiling.
“Let us, however, try the experiment.”
Breakfast over, he led me to the music-parlour, where we found a gentleman who, by his appearance, I judged to be a foreigner.

“You will be highly entertained, my
“Sophia,” said he. “Signore Bartorelli
“has the finest voice in England.”

I was, indeed, highly delighted with his inimitable performance. The harmony,

mony, however, did not so wholly intoxicate my senses as to make me forget that the stranger might, perhaps, be of use to me in accomplishing my wished-for escape. I found he spoke only Italian, which, I presume, was the reason my Lord ventured to trust me in his company, not suspecting that a country girl, like me, could have the slightest knowledge of that language. I could not, indeed, speak it with fluency, but could write it with propriety. This was an opportunity not to be lost. As soon as my Lord took his seat at the harpsichord, I wrote a few lines in Italian, on a leaf of my pocket book. The following is a translation of them.

S I R,

"S I R,

"I am an unfortunate girl whom
"Lord G—— confines in this house
"for the basest purposes. If you have
"any compassion for distressed virtue,
"make my case known to some charita-
"ble person who may be able to rescue
"me from the impending danger. If
"you know Lord Edmond ****, or
"even the Duke his father, inform ei-
"ther of them. I would rather apply to
"Lady G——, but fear to wound her
"peace by the knowledge of her hus-
"band's baseness. Be my friend, Sir,
"and heaven will reward you. Make my
"situation known to whom you please ;
"only let them deliver me from this
"hated prison."

You

You will perhaps wonder, my dear Lady Grace, that I should think of mentioning the Duke of ****; but you must know Lord Edmond's name slipped involuntarily from my pencil. I thought the gentleman might conceive a bad opinion of me for soliciting the protection of so young a man, and therefore, to remedy that error, not having a moment's time to reflect, named his father also, having nothing to fear from a man of his age and character, and, besides, having no reason to believe he had the smallest suspicion of his son's passion. Lady G—— was at too great a distance for immediate application; on the contrary, the vile Ainsley had told me that both Lord Edmond and

the Duke were in town. In short, I cared not into whose hands I fell, so I was but delivered out of Lord G——'s.

I watched an opportunity to slip my note into the stranger's hand, as he stood behind his Lordship, at the same time whispering in his ear, "Read that paper, Sir, when you can do it unobserved; and, if you have any humanity, comply with the request it contains." He bowed, and put it in his pocket, examined me with attention, and, by the air of his countenance, I judged he had the vanity to flatter himself he had made a conquest. This gave me no uneasiness, as I knew he would so soon be undeceived. The glimpse of hope this project inspired gave me spirits, and put me into

the best humour imaginable. I even spoke with cheerfulness and complaisance to the detestable Lord G——. He was visibly amazed at this seeming favourable change, which he no doubt attributed to my gratitude for the amusement which he had procured me.

“Dearest Sophia,” said he, “never did you appear so amiable as this morning. How much do those sweet smiles adorn your beauty! Only continue this engaging complacency, and you shall command me in every thing. I will have no will but yours.”

“Then, Sir, restore me to liberty. The free-born heart will not yield to compulsion. The methods you have hitherto taken to soften, have hardened it against you.” “Teach

“Teach me then, my lovely angel, a better method, for I would purchase your favour even at the expence of my life.”

“At the expence of mine, you mean, my Lord. My health already declines by close confinement: I am hardly allowed to breathe the fresh air.”

“If I durst hope my unremitted endeavours to please my lovely girl had produced the least spark of gratitude, you should have no longer reason to reproach me on that head: I would procure you every amusement the town as well as country could afford. The day is fine; would an airing in my chariot be agreeable?—I will order it this moment.” He rung the bell.

I could not expect much benefit in any respect from this expedition, but consented the more willingly as it would the sooner give my new friend, for such I hoped he would prove himself, an opportunity to read my billet. I expected, also, he would, on my return, have an answer ready to give me, which would inform me on what I had to depend. This thought so wholly engrossed me, that I paid little attention to the fine prospects my Lord pointed out to me, during our airing, nor had I any design of applying to any person we might meet on the road; since, if I failed, it would only make him double his vigilance for the future, and, by guarding me more strictly, nay perhaps removing

to

to another place, deprive me of the benefit I expected from my scheme. I therefore suffered two or three carriages to pass without attempting to call for help, having before experienced how little my screams availed me when my Lord could so easily put a stop to them.

He was much pleased with my behaviour. "You shall never," said he, "repent the confidence you place in me. I will patiently trust to time and your gratitude for that reward my constant passion merits."

While he spoke, a chariot and four approached. As the road we were then in was rather narrow, both carriages were obliged to moderate their pace, that they might, with more safety pass.

each other. The glass of that we met was down on the side next me.

O, Lady Grace, judge of my transport when I saw Lord Edmond!—He saw me too.—I uttered a loud scream. He must have heard me. He put his head out of the window, and, darting at me a look of infinite contempt, drove on without deigning to take any farther notice of either me or my detested companion, while I, almost petrified with horror at the killing glance he cast at me, sighing forth his dear name, sunk back, for some time deprived of sense and motion.

“What a cursed adventure!” cried my Lord, as I recovered; “but do not be alarmed, my Sophia, Lord Edmond

“is

“ is a man of honor, he will not injure
 “ your reputation, by revealing our se-
 “ cret. I have no apprehensions on my
 “ own account, for I know nobody
 “ that has a right to controul me.”

“ Monster !” cried I in a rage, “ you
 “ have ruined, for ever ruined me.
 “ Lord Edmond believes me now the
 “ vilest of my sex, he to whom I was
 “ once so dear. O kill me, and com-
 “ plete your cruelty; for think not I
 “ will live thus lost to fame. My repu-
 “ tation blasted, despised, detested by
 “ the only man I ever did, or can love,
 “ oh 'tis too much !”

“ It is well, Madam; I am glad I
 “ know your real sentiments. I shall
 “ now no longer be the dupe to your ar-
 “ tifices.

“tiffes. Fool that I was to hope any
“thing from such obstinate perverse-
“ness! No longer will I be imposed
“upon. By heavens I will be nobly re-
“venged for my slighted love. You
“observe no measures with me, why
“should I, like a tame fool, be more
“delicate? Your fate now draws to a
“crisis, depend upon it you shall soon
“be mine, I will avail myself of my
“power.”

“O Sir!—And yet why should I fear
“your threats, since death can at any
“time deliver me from your brutality?”

“Death!” cried he, with a provoking
laugh, “and where will you find the
“means? But there’s no fear: of two
“evils we always chuse the least.”

He

He ordered his carriage home as fast as the horses could carry us.

I now began to tremble for my danger, and to repent my indiscretion. I burst into a flood of tears.—He was affected.—I took advantage of this favourable disposition, and, dropping on my knees with supplicating voice and streaming eyes, implored his pity.

“ I now, my Lord, have no friend
 “ but you. A poor unfortunate girl, my
 “ reputation lost, detested by all the
 “ world. I apply to your compassion, to
 “ your generosity for protection. Do not
 “ oh do not make me more wretched!”

“ I wish to make you happy, Sophia,
 “ I wish to place you in a situation that
 “ shall excite the envy of your sex.”

“ Ah, Sir, say rather the contempt.”

“ No, Sophia, I will place you far
“ above that, you shall outshine the
“ proudest of them all.”

“ Ah, Sir, the poorest beggar, if she
“ has virtue, will possess a jewel of far
“ more value than all your fortune can
“ purchase for me. Were you to de-
“ prive me of that—”

“ What silly prejudices, my sweet
“ girl has imbibed from her rustic edu-
“ cation!—Virtue!—’tis an empty name.
“ wholly neglected in these modish days:
“ hardly one fine lady in ten thousand
“ that makes any pretensions to it.”

“ Fine ladies, my Lord, may do as
“ they please, but virtue is the only
“ treasure I possess; in losing that I lose

“ my

“ my all. Then I should be poor indeed,
“ justly despised by others, and no less
“ despicable to myself.”

“ Time and experience will enlarge
“ your ideas. But compose yourself, my
“ dear Sophia. I would still wish to be
“ generous, but beware how you again
“ alarm my jealousy. You are now, I
“ think, convinced Lord Edmond is lost
“ to you for ever: and love, I know,
“ from experience, cannot exist without
“ hope. Turn then your passion to a man
“ that will be more grateful for the fa-
“ vour. Lord Edmond tamely gave you
“ up; he was soon consoled for your
“ loss; nay he is going to bestow his
“ hand upon another. He is too much
“ a philosopher to love with fervor.”

I sighed.

“Yes,” thought I again, bursting into tears, “he is, indeed, lost to me for ever, and ’tis you, monster, who have robbed me of his esteem. But I must dissemble, I must conceal my hatred, I have yet hopes of escaping from your detested power. A few days will determine my fate.”

The carriage stopped. He led me in. Signore Bartorelli met us in the hall. I examined his countenance, and saw in it strong marks of compassion. He could see I had been in tears. His eyes told me he would do all in his power to relieve me. I begged my Lord’s leave to retire: he did not oppose my request. When I had ascended a few steps, I turned my head.

head. Signore Bartorelli made a motion as if going into the garden. My Lord was already in the parlour. This was too favourable an opportunity to be lost. He beckoned to me. I stole down again. He presented a letter and turned from me, lest we should be observed. I flew to my room, locked the door, and then read to the following purport.

“ Madam,

“ The unaffected modesty that appears in your countenance, prejudiced me in your favour the first moment I beheld you. I was sorry to find you in a situation that gave me reason to believe you had forfeited your virtue. Your note undeceived
“ me.

“me. I sincerely compassionate your
“sufferings, and will not rest till I have
“fallen on some method to effect your
“escape. I have the honor to be well
“known to the Duke of ****. Lord
“Edmond I have also seen: but the
“former will, I think, be the properest
“person to apply to, as he is more ad-
“vanced in age, and a gentleman of
“great honor and humanity. Make your-
“self easy, Madam, and depend upon it I
“will, before many days are passed, by
“some means or other, effect your deli-
“verance. I shall return to town this even-
“ing, and my first care shall be to procure
“you friends. I have the honor to be,

“Madam,

“Your most devoted humble servant,

“R. BARTORELLI.”

This, dear Lady Grace, is, nearly a literal translation of his note. You may better imagine than I describe the pleasure it gave me. The prospect of my deliverance, in some measure, banished the dear Lord Edmond from my thoughts. I went down to dinner with apparent serenity. My Lord tenderly enquired if I had recovered my fatigue. I answered with complacency. Signore Bartorelli dined with us. My Lord asked him, in Italian, if he did not think him the happiest man in the world to possess such a treasure of sweetness and beauty. The gentleman answered he made no doubt of it, were it not that he must feel some regret for his infidelity to so amiable a person as Lady G——.

“What,

“What, my wife, Signore? Ah, marriage would be insupportable without some of those agreeable resources, and they are so common, now-a-days, that nobody condemns them. Nor, indeed,” added he, “is it reasonable they should be condemned. We marry for conveniency, and keep a mistress for pleasure.”

I could not restrain my blushes at this mortifying conversation, which he little suspected I understood.—How tediously did the day drag on!

After dinner Signore Bartorelli took his leave. My Lord desired him to return next day, and to bring the music he mentioned.

“I will

"I will not fail," replied he, casting a significant glance at me.

I would have retired to my apartment, but my Lord besought me to favour him with my company. I did not dare to exasperate him by a refusal. He proposed a walk in the garden: with this I also complied, as it was necessary to dissemble. I hoped it would not be long before I was delivered from so hateful a restraint. His behaviour was rather more free than usual: he put his arm round my waist, forced a kiss or two in spite of my resistance. In vain I remonstrated. He deserved, he said, some little indulgence for the respectful distance he had hitherto observed. I trembled at this alarming change in his behaviour, but
durst

durst not manifest my indignation, fearing to drive him to greater extremities. I pretended to be tired, and begged he would let me return to the house.—He would accompany me. I would have retired to my room.

“If you do,” cried he, with a look that added to my terror, “I positively follow you.”

At this I hurried into the parlour. He took a book out of his pocket, and, drawing a chair close to mine, said, “Now, Sophia, you shall hear how agreeably I mean to entertain you.”—I was pleased that he had made choice of so innocent an amusement.—“This author,” continued he, “understands human nature, and knows how to de-
scribe

“scribe the various emotions of the
“human heart—but you shall hear.”

So saying, he began to read one of
the vilest descriptions that ever wounded
the ear of modesty.—I snatched the
book and threw it at a distance on the
floor.

“Charming little termagant,” cried
my Lord, catching me in his arms,
“this is a just rebuke. I ought, indeed,
“to make a better use of my time than
“in reading to a lady who indulges me
“with a *tête a tête*.”

“O heavens, my Lord, what do you
“mean?”

“That this very day the fate of my
“Sophia shall be decided. I can no
“longer master my passion, nor have I

“re-

“received any recompence for my long
“and painful self-denial: nay, who
“knows but you may despise me for my
“tamefulness! At last, however, I am de-
“termined to make use of my power;
“therefore, my dear, sweet girl, yield
“with a good grace to my ardent wishes,
“for love admits no more delays: all
“potent wine has conquered my timi-
“dity.”

I was ready to sink with terror. His looks were still more alarming than his words. He again attempted to seize me in his arms.—I sprung from him. One of the windows which looked into the garden was open. It was at some distance from the ground. Fear gave me wings. Without reflecting on the danger
of

of such a leap, I jumped out and ran to the back door of the house, judging my own apartment the safest asylum. My Lord, who had also leaped the window, pursued me, but, as I had the start of him, I reached my room, and got the door bolted, before he overtook me. He stood for some time intreating to be admitted, and even threatened to force his way in spite of bolts and bars. At this I threw open the window.

“ If you offer to come near me, my
“ Lord,” cried I in a resolute voice, “ I
“ swear by heaven that I will escape by
“ the window, tho’ death should be the
“ certain consequence of my fall. Do
“ not, therefore, make me desperate,
“ unless you wish to be my murderer;
“ for,

“for, you shall find, I dare to die in
“defence of my honor.”

“Dearest Sophia, how you terrify me!

“I shudder at your threats. Be assured

“I will not molest you, only let me

“hear you close that fatal window, the

“very thought of which makes me

“tremble, and I promise you on my

“honor to retire.”

“No matter whether shut or open,

“my Lord, ’tis you only, that can

“render it dangerous.”

He renewed his intreaties, swearing he
would not stir till he heard it closed. I
was forced to comply.

“Now farewell, my sweet, obstinate

“girl. Compose yourself, you have a

“powerful advocate in my heart. Only

“pro-

“promise to forgive what is past, and it
“shall be the last time you shall ever
“have cause to complain of my beha-
“viour,” I answered only with my
sighs and tears. As soon as I heard him
go away, I flung myself into a chair,
and there freely indulged my anguish,
thanking heaven for my escape, and be-
seeeching its future protection. While I
sat in this manner I heard a rustling in
my closet, the door of which instantly
opened, and in a moment the monster
Lord G—— was at my feet.

“Stratagem,” cried the insulting
wretch, “is better than force. Was I
“not cunning to get a private passage
“opened this morning while we were
“out? I have long since been convinced
“I must

“I must expect nothing from your generosity or compassion. Insensible girl!”

I wrung my hands in an agony of grief and despair.

“Now, now I am lost indeed!”

The violence of my emotions were too much for my spirits: I fainted.—When I recovered I found that my Lord had been obliged to call for assistance. He held me reclined in his arms, while Mrs. Green was bathing my temples with hartshorn.

“Your Lordship,” said she, “had better leave her for a while. She is, you see, extremely ill.”

I uttered a deep sigh, and relapsed into another fit—They placed me on the bed.

bed. It was some hours before I perfectly recovered the use of my senses. He was terrified at the condition in which he saw me, and had sent for a surgeon to bleed me. I have before observed, we were at no great distance from London. It was now almost dark. My Lord knelt by the bedside, while Mrs. Green was busily employed in administering remedies. I raved and wept by turns, for my apprehensions had almost deprived me of reason. He endeavoured to calm my emotions, swearing he neither had, nor would injure my virtue; that he repented his villanous attempt; that I had made a convert of him; that he would now prove himself my disinterested friend; that as soon as

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I was

I was well I should be at liberty: and all he desired, when I left him, was, that I would allow him to provide for me, so as to save me for the future from the temptation to which he had exposed me.

While with these, perhaps delusive, promises he endeavoured to calm my agitated breast, a loud rapping was heard at the gate.

“It is the surgeon,” said he; “go, Green, and conduct him up.”

“O no, no,” cried I, clinging by her, “do not leave me.”

“She shall not, my sweet girl. Too much cause have I given you for this amiable terror.”

He rung the bell. A servant entered.

“Desire

"Desire the gentleman to walk up stairs," said he.

In a few moments the door opened. But judge of my astonishment, nor was my Lord's less than mine, when we beheld, instead of the surgeon, the Duke of ****.

My Lord lost the power of speech, while I uttered a scream of joy. At last Lord G——, a little recovered from his surprise, apologized to his Grace, for his servant's stupidity in bringing him to that apartment; adding, "But now, if you please, I will attend you to a place fitter for your reception."

"No, my Lord, this is the very place I wished to come to. I fear here has been some iniquitous proceedings. I

“ never suspected your Lordship would
“ have been guilty of so dishonorable
“ an action.”

“ How!” cried my Lord, furiously,
“ Who has a right to censure my con-
“ duct?”

“ Your friends, my Lord, all who
“ study your real interest. You will one
“ day severely repent your inhumanity
“ to that poor unfortunate girl. I fear
“ I come too late to save her from ruin.”

“ She wants not your Grace’s protec-
“ tion: I myself will repair the injuries
“ I have done, or rather attempted to do
“ her. Her unaffected virtue has made a
“ convert of me. By heavens, I would
“ not again behold her reduced to the
“ condition from which she is but just
“ re-

“ recovered, to be master of the Indies,
“ nay not even to purchase the possession
“ of her beauties.”

“ Now, my Lord,” cried the Duke,
taking his hand, “ you are again your-
“ self, and worthy my esteem. But lest
“ you should relapse, for I will own the
“ temptation is powerful, permit me,
“ till we can determine on some proper
“ establishment for Sophia, to take her
“ under my care. Perhaps she is too ill
“ to be removed, at least for this night.”

“ O no, no,” said I, “ let me go: dear,
“ dear Sir, take me with you.”

“ Too justly, Sophia,” said my Lord,
“ have I incurred your hate; but if my
“ word, my oath may be relied on, you
“ have no farther danger to apprehend.”

Without attending to what he said, I arose, and, throwing myself at his Grace's feet, "Dear, worthy Sir, protect me! "Do not, do not leave me to his mercy!"

"Compose yourself, my good girl, "banish your apprehensions. Let us retire, my Lord, and consider what is proper to be done. I think, for both your sakes, she ought not to remain here. Your Lady is still ignorant of the adventure: let us, for the sake of her peace, endeavour to keep her so. "I will take care of Sophia." So saying, he left the room.

My Lord paused a moment, as if irresolute. At last, heaving a mournful sigh, "O this cursed marriage! but for that, to what felicity might I not aspire!

"Sophia,"

"Sophia," turning to me with a sup-
 plicating look, "Can you forgive me, my
 " dear virtuous girl?—How can I part
 " with you?—I must not trust myself in
 " your presence—your beauty staggers
 " my resolution.—Oh how I love you!
 " But tell me, before I tear myself from
 " you, can you pardon my cruelty? Do,
 " my sweet girl, give me that consola-
 " tion, in return for the sacrifice I am
 " going to make."

He took my hand.

"If you, my Lord, will let me go
 " with the Duke, I promise you that all
 " my wrongs shall be buried in oblivion;
 " nay, now you have gained such a noble
 " victory over yourself, I will even en-
 " deavour to esteem you."

“Sweet girl!—But I must not listen
“to your insinuating voice, it quite un-
“mans me.—Farewell then.”

Here he again paused, but a season-
able message from his Grace obliged him
to go down.

As soon as the gentlemen were gone,
I packed up my cloaths, and, with a
joyful heart, made myself ready for my
journey. The pleasing emotions the
thought of it inspired so raised my spirits,
that I was insensible of the weakness and
languor which my severe fits had occa-
sioned. It appeared an age till I heard
from the Duke. At last, a servant came
to inform me his carriage was at the
door, and that he was waiting for me.
I ran, or rather flew down stairs, at this
wel-

welcome summons. I would again have cast myself at the feet of my generous deliverer, but he prevented me, and, taking my hand, placed me in his chariot. I could not find words to express my gratitude, my heart was too full. The prospect of my escape had, hitherto, supported my spirits, but now they began to flag. I found myself extremely ill, and it was with the utmost difficulty his Grace could keep me from fainting. He was condescendingly kind.

When we reached the end of our journey, he obligingly supported me into the house, for I was exceedingly faint. I thought he had been carrying me to London, nor did I perceive my mistake till the carriage stopped: I then

found we were still in the country. The house was not so large nor elegant as might have been expected from a man of his rank and fortune; but he soon explained the mystery.

"I durst not take you to town," said he, "as I feared my Lord might relapse, and again endeavour to get you into his power. In this retirement you will be safe."

"O, Sir, dispose of me as you think proper."

"In whatever manner I dispose of you, Sophia, depend upon it, it shall be for your advantage."

He led me into a parlour, and made me drink some hartshorn and water, which greatly revived me. He then ordered

dered his housekeeper to conduct me to my apartment, where for the first time since I left the castle, did I enjoy tranquil and undisturbed repose. I arose next morning perfectly recovered from my indisposition: so salutary is peace of mind.

While at breakfast, "Sophia," said his Grace, "how are your spirits? Do you think you are enough recovered to bear, without too violent emotions, an agreeable surprise?"

I blushed.

"Good heavens," thought I, "What can he mean? Surely Lord Edmond is not here! Ah if this worthy old man should know, and generously approve his passion!"

How weak, how easily deluded by hope is a heart in love!

“You do not answer me, Sophia.”

“Dear Sir, you overwhelm me with your goodness. What new blessing are you going to confer on me?”

“What is become of your father, Sophia? Have you discovered the place of his retreat?”

“Alas! No, Sir,” bursting into tears, “that is a happiness which I begin to despair of.”

“Suppose, my amiable girl, I could conduct you to him, will you promise not to be too much affected with the tender interview?”

“O, Sir, dear Sir,” throwing myself at his feet, “Heaven will reward you.”

“Where,

“ Where, where is my beloved pa-
“ rent ? ”

I was half wild with joy. He raised
and placed me in a chair.

“ Compose yourself, Sophia, and pre-
“ pare to receive him.”

He left me, and in a few minutes I
was in the arms of my delighted father.
No language can describe the transports
of our meeting. He clasped me to his
breast while he bedewed my face with his
tears.

“ My child ! my child ! Are you then
“ again restored to me ? Do I then again
“ fold thee, unpolluted, to my paternal
“ bosom ? O now, now we will never
“ part ; no villanous seducer shall again
“ tear thee from me.”

“ Now,”

“ Now,” said the Duke, “ I hope I
“ have made you ample amends for the
“ confinement of which you so much
“ repined.”

“ You have, indeed, Sir.—But still I
“ cannot account for your extraordinary
“ treatment of one who was an absolute
“ stranger to you, and who never did,
“ nor had it in his power or inclination
“ to injure you.”

“ I had particular reasons for my con-
“ duct, Sir, reasons which I am not yet
“ at liberty to explain; but I have now
“ proved myself your friend, I have saved
“ your daughter from ruin.”

“ That one noble action, Sir, cancels
“ all my wrongs. I ask no more of hea-
“ ven and you, but that you will now
“ permit us to depart.” “ Incon-

“ Inconsiderate man ! Where would
 “ you go to ? Would you again expose
 “ your daughter to danger ? Lord G—’s
 “ reformation was too sudden to be last-
 “ ing. You are not safe in England :
 “ your poverty and her beauty will ex-
 “ pose her to a thousand temptations.
 “ If you will be ruled by me and con-
 “ sent to live abroad, I will make an
 “ ample provision for you both, either
 “ in the East or West Indies. I promise
 “ to put you in a way to make your
 “ fortune. You cannot, I think, in-
 “ digent and friendless as you are, have
 “ any particular attachment to your
 “ native country.”

“ I see,” whispered my father, “ he
 “ has discovered the secret of Lord Ed-

mond’s

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“mond’s passion. This, indeed, I
 “guessed to be the cause of my confine-
 “ment, tho’ he never explained his
 “motives for so strange a conduct.”

“What say you?” continued the
 Duke, “will you consent to regain your
 “liberty by accepting my proposal, or
 “must I still retain you my prisoners?
 “Chuse which you will, for there is no
 “other alternative.”

“O, my father!” cried I, “let us
 “go, let us seek some more hospitable
 “shore. The very savages cannot use
 “us worse than they have done who
 “boast the name of Christians.”

“Well then, if you consent, I will
 “immediately give orders for your voy-
 “age. A ship sails in a few days, I am

“informed,

“ informed, for the East Indies. I will
 “ speak to one of the directors, by whose
 “ means I hope to procure you a profi-
 “ table employment. — What say you
 “ to my plan ?”

My father paused. I renewed my en-
 treaties — But that I may not tire you,
 dear Lady Grace, by my minuteness, I
 shall only add that, in a few days, every
 thing was in readiness for our departure.
 The Duke made me a present of very
 handsome cloaths, and indeed every thing
 both for my father and me. For him
 he procured a place, the salary of which
 was considerable. And thus, without the
 least regret, except what I felt at leaving
 dear Lord Edmond (whose love, how-
 ever, I could never hope to regain after
 my

my adventure with Lord G——, and the bad opinion he had imbibed of me) I bade a long adieu to my native country. My father easily guessed the reason why the Duke compelled us to this banishment. He endeavoured to console me for the loss of my lover, by representing, in the strongest terms, the misfortunes that must have attended so indiscreet an union. For my part, I now began to be inured to misery; and tho' neither time nor absence could weaken my passion, yet, as there was no remedy, I patiently submitted to my fate.

It was late at night when we embarked. I had never before seen a ship, tho' I had often read descriptions of them in voyages. Nothing could equal my surprise,

prise, nor the terror I felt to trust myself on the watery element. I was amazed to find so many handsome apartments, and so many conveniencies in this overgrown bird, as I called it, on seeing its outstretched wings; for such the sails appeared. There were a great many passengers on board, but I stayed not to examine what kind of beings they were. As I was fatigued with my journey, my spirits dejected, and my head giddy with the motions of the ship, I immediately retired to the little cabin allotted me, where I was almost stifled for want of air.

By my dear father's advice, I instantly went to bed, and there, instead of sleep, indulged my melancholy thoughts.

“ Ah,”

“ Ah,” sighed I, “ now, indeed, is Lord
“ Edmond lost to me for ever ! I am
“ going to be transported into a new
“ world, where I shall never behold him
“ more ! Now, my happy rival may
“ triumph : I only am marked out for
“ misery and wretchedness ! — Oh, my
“ dear lamented mother ! since you, my
“ guardian angel, left me, I have not
“ known a moment’s peace : my life
“ has been one continued scene of mis-
“ fortunes.”

In such reflections as these did I spend
the tedious night. Next morning I
found myself exceedingly ill. My father
came to see me. The sea, which made
me sick as death, happily did not affect
him, he having, as he said, been sea-
soned

soned to it in his youth. This sickness continued for three or four days, during which time I had never stirred from my cabin. My father spent much of his time with me. Sometimes endeavouring to amuse me by giving me a description of the place we were going to, at others he read to me. — But it is time to bid my dear Lady Grace adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

IN about a week, I was so well recovered that I was able to leave my cabin. The weather was remarkably fine, and the wind so favourable, that we had the prospect not only of a safe but expeditious voyage.

As my father had told me there were several genteel passengers on board, I took some little pains in adorning my person before I made my appearance amongst them; for no trials nor misfortunes can wholly banish vanity from the female heart. I found myself perfectly satisfied with my figure, and was pleased to find my complexion had not suffered
by

by my illness; it had rather acquired an additional delicacy.

My father led me into the great cabin, which was spacious and well furnished. I found the company divided into little parties, amusing themselves according to their various inclinations: some at cards, others reading. Among the rest, I saw a gentleman and lady seated near the window, whose graceful and elegant appearance soon engrossed the greatest share of my attention. The Lady held a music-book, while the gentleman was tuning her guitar.—They deserve a more particular description.

She appeared to be about twenty, tall, genteel, an agreeable face full of spirit and expression. The young gentleman
was,

was, next to Lord Edmond, the handsomest man I had ever seen; nay, I even fancied I discovered in him a resemblance of my lover, only his hair and eyes were darker: nor was his complexion so delicate, as he was a good deal tanned, which gave an agreeable manliness to his countenance. His forehead, however, still retained its natural fairness. He had fine teeth, and a most engaging smile. His person was elegant to the highest degree.

They were so intent on their music, that, for some time, they did not observe me. The rest of the company had politely congratulated me on my recovery. An elderly gentleman, of a good mien, respectfully taking my hand, said, he must

must beg leave to introduce me to his daughter, who would, he was sure, be happy to have so lovely a companion. He led me to the young lady I described before. She arose, and paid me a genteel compliment, eyed me with attention, then glanced a look at the young gentleman. A blush overspread her face, on seeing his eyes eagerly fixed on mine. He gazed on me, indeed, with such visible admiration (for the expression that passion gives to the features is easily distinguished) that my face soon kept my new acquaintance in countenance. I will not call her my new friend, because I did not receive a reception cordial enough to make me hope for that felicity. I placed myself by her: her fa-

ther joined mine, with whom I found he was on a very intimate footing. My companions and I entered into conversation: music was the subject, on which the young gentleman displayed great taste and judgement. The guitar was tuned. The young lady, whose name was Granville, played at his request, but I cannot say she performed with any great execution; nor was her voice, with which she accompanied it, one of the most harmonious in the world; but the easy gracefulness of her manner made us the less sensible of these defects. Mr. Durant, the name of the young gentleman, begged me next to favour him with an air, as he was convinced, by what I had said on the subject, that I could play.

play. His voice, and the look that accompanied this request, were not to be resisted. I complied with the best grace I could. Miss Granville was visibly mortified, while the gentleman was, or affected to be, in raptures with my voice: nor was he less charmed, he said, at my delicate manner of touching the instrument. He was a perfect enthusiast in regard to music, and I soon after found he was no less skilled in the sister arts, painting and poetry.

After dinner, as we sat at table, he took out his pencil, and wrote extempore a very elegant copy of verses on Miss Granville and me, in which he did more than justice to both our charms. This put her into high good humour,

and she enlivened the conversation by her agreeable vivacity. Since she could not rival me in beauty, she was determined to out-shine me in wit. In this she was successful as she could desire; for, it must be owned, she had in this greatly the advantage of me, nor ought I to have contended with her for the conquest. Love generally cures us of coquetry: a tincture of it, however, I must own still remained in me. Spite of that passion, Mr. Durant was too amiable not to excite in me a desire to please, tho' I had no design but to gratify my vanity. I sought to be amused, and no man could possess more agreeable talents for that purpose. Tho' he divided his attention pretty equally between Miss

Granville

Granville and me, yet his expressive eyes left me no room to doubt to which he gave the preference.

Next morning most of the company went on deck, as the weather was fine. I stayed alone in the cabin, having met with a book that engaged my attention. I was so deeply interested in the fate of the heroine of it, that I had not for some time raised my eyes. At last coming to an affecting passage, I stopped to wipe off a falling tear, at the same time exclaiming, "O love! of what misery art thou the cause!"

"Ah! Madam," cried Mr. Durant, who, without my perceiving it, was at my elbow, "do you from experience make that affecting remark?"

I started with surprise, and the book dropped from my hand. He stooped to take it up, and at the same moment a paper fell from his on my lap. I hastily took it from thence, but he endeavoured to prevent my seeing what was on it.

“Do not, Madam,” said he, “cruelly
“deprive me of that faint copy of beau-
“ties which no painting can express.
“Happy, thrice happy will that envied
“mortal be, who is destined to be mas-
“ter of the lovely original.”

I found, on examination, he had, while I was intent on my book, sketched out my picture, and that so like, that even I could perceive the striking resemblance.

I returned it to him with a smile.

“What

"What various amusements, Sir," said I, "do your agreeable talents afford you!"

"This last, Madam," returned he, sighing, "was as dangerous as pleasing; for, while I traced your fine features with my pencil, the God of love, with one of his keenest darts, engraved it on my heart. His skill is far superior to mine: he has in his portrait done justice to your charms, and his performance bids defiance to time: the image he has imprinted can never be effaced."

"Let us join the company on deck," said I, rising, and assuming a cold reserve. "You gentlemen seem to have no language but flattery to enter-

"tain us with, and that, be assured, is
"far from being to my taste."

As I spoke this, the door of a small cabin opened, and a lady I had not before seen made her appearance.

"I rejoice to see you, dear Mrs. Hervey," cried Mr. Durant, "I hope you are perfectly recovered from the indisposition which deprived us of your agreeable company." Her answer was accompanied with a smile which rendered her amiable countenance still more engaging. I felt myself greatly prejudiced in her favour from the first moment I beheld her, and I soon found I had the good fortune to be no less pleasing to her. We contracted a friendship during

during the voyage, which I trust will end only with our lives.

I found she was a widow, and left in very affluent circumstances: that she had accompanied her father to England, and was now returning to the East Indies in order to settle her affairs, intending, when that was accomplished, to go back to England to reside in her native country, or rather that of her family, as she was born abroad. I was sorry to find we should be obliged to separate as soon we landed, as my father's employment would fix us in a different part of the country, and at a considerable distance from that to which she was going. She soon discovered Mr. Durant's partiality,

and congratulated me on so important a conquest.

She told me he was nephew to the governor of Bengal, that he had been sent to England for his education, and was now going to take possession of a large estate to which he was become heir by the death of his father. She believed him a young gentleman of great merit, and, as I must confess, every way accomplished. “ Miss Granville,” she added, “ whose father had a company in
 “ the India service, had spared no pains
 “ to enslave him, and had reason to hope
 “ for success till I made my appearance,
 “ and, by my superior charms,” she was pleased to say, “ destroyed that flattering
 “ hope ;

“hope; for which,” continued Mrs. Hervey smiling, “she most cordially hates you, and will do all in her power to be revenged.”

“And I,” said I in the same tone, “will do all in my power to make her admirer return to his allegiance, for his attachment to me will be, Love’s labour lost.”

It is certain the dear Lord Edmond’s image guarded every avenue to my heart; and tho’ the spirit of coquetry, too natural to our sex, made me at first wish to please, merely to gratify my vanity, yet no sooner did I find reason to believe Mr. Durant was serious in his attachment, than I used every possible means to discourage his hopes.

One evening, finding me alone, he in the most affecting manner besought me to tell him how he had incurred my displeasure, which he was too sure he had, by the mortifying change he had for some days past painfully remarked in my behaviour. I told him, sighing, he must pardon me if I had been any way deficient in politeness, and attribute it to that dejection of spirits into which my misfortunes had plunged me.

“ Misfortunes !” cried he with emotion : “ Ah, Madam, have you, who
“ are worthy every blessing heaven can
“ bestow, experienced any ? Young and
“ lovely as you are, what savage could
“ have the cruelty to give you a mo-
“ ment’s pain ?”

“ Alas !

“ Alas ! Sir, hardly have I known
“ one day’s peace since I entered into
“ this troublesome world : nor are my
“ future prospects more inviting. No,
“ I was born to suffer : my heart-felt
“ sorrows admit of no consolation.”

“ Heart-felt ! ” faltered he with
trembling emotion : “ Ah, then, my
“ fears were just, and I must despair !
“ But at least, enchanting Miss Stanley,
“ permit me to aspire to your friendship.
“ Would you deign to honor me with
“ your confidence — Yet I dread to
“ hear my doom — Say, most amiable of
“ your sex, are your affections — ”

He paused, and fixed his eyes mourn-
fully on my face.

“ I shall

“ I shall be proud of your friendship,
“ Sir, since I highly esteem your merit,
“ but friendship is all I have to bestow.”

He turned pale as death.

“ Good heavens ! then all my flatter-
“ ing hopes are blasted, and I am severely
“ punished for my presumption. But
“ I feel, nevertheless, it is impossible
“ to conquer my deep-rooted passion.
“ No, I never can cease to adore you.”

I raised my eyes, and was instantly
covered with blushes, when I discovered
my father, who, I made no doubt, had
overheard part of our conversation ; nor
was I mistaken.

“ I must not, Mr. Durant,” said he
smiling, “ suffer you thus to fill my
“ girl’s

“ girl’s head with ridiculous notions
“ by your flattery.”

“ Flattery, Sir, was far from my
“ thoughts, while I paid a just tribute
“ of praise to the merit and beauty of
“ your lovely daughter. Durst I have
“ hoped to meet with her approbation,
“ I should long ere now have solicited
“ your permission to pay my addresses.
“ But, alas! I must now give up that
“ transporting wish.”

“ When you formed that wish, Mr.
“ Durant,” said my father, “ you per-
“ haps did not know that my Sophia
“ had nothing but her virtue, and the
“ few charms she is mistress of, to re-
“ commend her to your choice.”

“ Ah,

“ Ah, Sir, and do not these entitle
“ her to the love and esteem of all who
“ behold her? My greatest ambition
“ would have been to have laid my for-
“ tune at her feet, were it ten times
“ larger than it is.”

“ You are very generous, Sir: and be
“ assured nothing would give me more
“ pleasure than to see my child united
“ to so much worth and honor. I hope
“ Sophia is no less sensible of the honor
“ you do her by a proposal so nobly dis-
“ interested.”

“ Yes, my dear father, Mr. Durant
“ has all my gratitude and esteem, but
“ that, you know, is all I have to be-
“ stow, since my heart is no longer in
“ my gift.”

“ Sophia,

“ Sophia, your notions are a little too
“ romantic,” said my father. “ But if
“ Mr. Durant thinks it worth his while
“ to continue his agreeable assiduity, I
“ do not doubt but his engaging ac-
“ complishments will soon produce a
“ change in your sentiments.”

“ Ah, Sir,” cried he grasping his
hand, “ what delightful, what animat-
“ ing hopes do you inspire ! Happy in
“ having your sanction, no endeavours,
“ on my side, shall be wanting to gain
“ the inestimable prize.”

“ That you have my approbation, Mr.
“ Durant, is most certain, and I hope
“ my daughter is too dutiful to oppose
“ my inclination, when her felicity is
“ all I have in view.”

I burst

I burst into tears.

"Alas! Sir, what is it you demand
of me? Lord Edmond is, and ever
must be sole master of my affection."

"Imprudent girl! too much have
you already suffered from his fatal
passion: but now he is lost to you for
ever, think not I will indulge you in
your unfortunate, ill-placed attach-
ment. If you hope for the continu-
ance of my favour, prepare to yield
obedience to my will."

What could I say? It was the first
time my father ever had cause to exert
his authority, since I never before found
any reluctance to obey his commands.
— I could only answer with my tears.

Mr. Durant fell at my feet.

"Never,

“ Never, lovely Sophia, will I owe
 “ your hand to compulsion. But per-
 “ mit me to hope that time may soften
 “ your heart in my favour. My whole
 “ study shall be, if possible, to deserve
 “ the inestimable blessing.”

He arose on the entrance of Mrs. Her-
 vey, and I retired to my cabin, where I
 freely indulged my sorrow. Love and
 duty raised a perfect tempest in my breast.
 The latter, after a severe struggle, was
 compelled to yield to the charms of my
 Edmond. “ No, most amiable of men,”
 sighed I, “ tho’ you are lost to me for
 “ ever, yet never will I give my hand
 “ to another.”

My father came in: he at first endea-
 voured to soothe me; but, finding me
 deter-

determined not to encourage Mr. Durant's addresses, he changed his tone, and commanded me, in the most peremptory manner, to look upon him as my future husband, if I valued my own happiness, his peace and blessing. He then launched out in his praise, and painted in the strongest colours the advantage of such an alliance.

He should never, he said, be perfectly at ease till he saw me married: I had suffered, and still might suffer much from the intriguing sex: this wished-for union would deliver him from all his anxious fears: Mr. Durant's merit and accomplishments would ensure my felicity.

"Do not then," added he, "be refractory, my beloved child. I apply

"to

“to your gratitude. Think how many
“sleepless nights and melancholy days
“I have passed on your account.”

I shall not repeat all that passed in this affecting conversation: my father’s tenderness was far more irresistible than his authority.—I, at last, promised to listen to Mr. Durant’s addresses, and, if possible, bring my heart to approve him.

Behold him now, Lady Grace, my declared lover, sparing no pains to render himself agreeable to me, and encouraged by my father, who was his strenuous advocate. Mrs. Hervey, also, interested herself in his favour. Miss Granville pined with envy, lost her vivacity, and could scarce command herself so far as to be commonly civil to me, her de-
tested

tested rival. Alas! she knew not how little I was inclined to triumph in my unwish'd-for conquest.

I longed for the end of our voyage, that I might be released from Mr. Durant's teasing importunity. He was continually at my side, pouring forth the effusions of his enamoured heart; but mine, in spite of his unremitted endeavours, continued insensible to all his engaging attractions. The man we can allow to be agreeable, nay even handsome, as a common acquaintance, loses, if the affections are engaged to another, all his amiable qualities, when he becomes a lover. I no longer admired his skill in music, his painting, his poetry. Even his personal graces served only as
foils

foils to those of my more charming Edmond, whose dear image for ever swam before my sight, and seemed to upbraid me for listening to his rival. A secret sorrow preyed upon my spirits. I durst no longer make my father the confidant of my weakness. I spent my nights in sighs and tears, and thus made myself amends, by indulging my grief, for the painful restraint I was forced to observe through the day. Kind Mrs. Hervey saw through the mask of my affected cheerfulness, and besought me to unbosom myself to her, who was my sincere friend. I gave her a sketch of my unhappy story, concealing, however, the names of all that were concerned in it, except that of my Edmond, which slipped involuntarily from me.

“ Lord

“ Lord Edmond!” cried she, surprised,
“ What the second son of the Duke
“ of ****?”

“ Yes,” returned I; “ that was my
“ amiable, my for ever esteemed lover.”

“ Good heavens!” said she, “ and
“ that is the very person who, by my
“ father’s means, is in a fair way to lose
“ his estate; or rather of being obliged
“ to resign it to the lawful heir. You
“ have, I suppose, heard of the affair?”

“ I have, Madam, but not the par-
“ ticulars.”

“ Then, my dear girl, I will, to amuse
“ and divert your thoughts from your
“ own situation, give you a brief detail
“ of them.

“ My

“ My father’s sister was privately
 “ married to the eldest son of Lord
 “ Dudley, while a youth at college.
 “ The ceremony was, however, per-
 “ formed in all its proper forms, and
 “ duly registered. The licence was
 “ given to my father, as a security that
 “ Mr. Dudley would make the affair
 “ publick on the death of his Lordship,
 “ whose pardon, the match being so
 “ very unequal in point of fortune,
 “ he had no hopes of obtaining dur-
 “ ing his life. My aunt, who gave
 “ her hand not from motives of ambi-
 “ tion but love, was satisfied with this
 “ assurance, nor wished to be acknow-
 “ ledged his wife at the expence of ex-
 “ posing her husband to the resentment

“ of his haughty father. Alas ! she was
“ not doomed to reap the reward this
“ generous sacrifice merited : she died
“ about a twelvemonth after their mar-
“ riage in bringing into the world a son
“ and heir, as she hoped he would prove.
“ After her death, my father, at the
“ request of the afflicted Mr. Dudley,
“ took the child under his protection,
“ till the former was at liberty to ac-
“ knowledge him. My father was in
“ the navy. In consequence of which
“ he was some years after obliged to go
“ abroad. His brother-in-law then took
“ home his child, but judged it pru-
“ dent, till things were ripe for an ex-
“ planation, to pass him on the world,
“ and on Lord Dudley, as his natural
“ son.

“ son. For some time he kept up a
 “ regular correspondence with my fa-
 “ ther, who meeting with an advantage-
 “ ous match in the East Indies, deter-
 “ mined to remain there till Mr. Dud-
 “ ley, then Lord Dudley, informed him
 “ of his father’s death : he then resolved
 “ to return to England that, by being
 “ present, he might see justice done to
 “ his nephew. While he waited with
 “ no small impatience for this happy
 “ event, a letter arrived from Lord
 “ Dudley, informing him of the young
 “ man’s death. He had too good an
 “ opinion of his honor to doubt the
 “ truth of this fatal news. Having thus
 “ lost a nephew whom he loved as a
 “ son, he had no longer any inducement

“ to return to his native country; he
“ therefore suffered his own family, and
“ the accumulating a large fortune,
“ wholly to engross him. The certi-
“ ficate was still among his papers, but
“ preserved more by accident than de-
“ sign. To be short, my mother died.
“ I, his only daughter, became a wi-
“ dow. Some affairs, relating to my
“ late husband, obliged me to go to
“ England. My father could not bear
“ the thought even of a short separation,
“ and therefore accompanied me. The
“ first thing he did, on coming to Eng-
“ land, was to enquire for his brother-
“ in-law, with whom he had for some
“ years gradually dropped all correspond-
“ ence. He had heard, however, from
“ others

“ others of his father’s death, and of
 “ his second marriage. We now learnt
 “ that *he*, also, was dead, and his grand-
 “ son in possession of the estate, in right
 “ of his mother, who married the Duke
 “ of * * *. This grandson, my dear
 “ Sophia, is Lord Edmond, who in-
 “ herited not the title, as that was ex-
 “ tinct. Satisfied with these particulars,
 “ my father would have made no far-
 “ ther enquiry, had he not accidentally
 “ met with an old steward who had
 “ lived with Lord Dudley before he went
 “ abroad, and who had always shewn
 “ great fondness for his young master’s
 “ supposed natural son. So many years
 “ had elapsed since they met, that it
 “ was impossible they should know each

“ other ; but, in the course of conver-
“ sation, my father’s name being men-
“ tioned by some of the company, the
“ steward eyed him with attention, and,
“ in spite of the change which time had
“ produced, recollected my father’s fea-
“ tures, and then reminded him of their
“ former acquaintance. On this, my
“ father asked a more particular account
“ of his nephew’s death, Mr. Dudley’s
“ natural son, as he called him, that Mr.
“ Smith might the better know whom
“ he meant. His death ! replied he ;
“ it was indeed reported he was dead,
“ but to my certain knowledge it was
“ without foundation. You know how
“ fond my master was of him, continued
“ the steward, and what expence he
bestowed

“ bestowed on his education; had he
 “ been his lawful heir, he could not have
 “ shewn more affection: but on his
 “ marrying Lady Mary S—, affairs took
 “ another turn; the poor young gen-
 “ tleman was forbid the house, having
 “ nothing but his ensigncy, which you
 “ know, Sir, was purchased for him while
 “ almost a boy, to subsist on. He often
 “ came to wait on his father, but was
 “ constantly denied admittance. Some
 “ time after my Lady brought him a
 “ lawful heir. This child now engrossed
 “ all his fondness. It is true our new
 “ Lady was both Lord and Master, so
 “ that he did not always, I believe, fol-
 “ low his own inclinations. At length,
 “ the young gentleman exasperated him

“ still more by marrying the daughter
“ of his captain, without asking his
“ father’s leave or approbation. This
“ was several years after being dismissed
“ from home. He came now, and un-
“ der a feigned name, got admittance;
“ but, alas! he soon returned with a
“ countenance so dejected, that I easily
“ guessed what kind of reception he
“ had met with. I did not see him again
“ for several years: during which time
“ my Lord, for what reason I cannot
“ imagine, spread a report that he was
“ dead, nay, I myself read it in the pa-
“ pers. At that time I had no reason
“ to doubt the truth of it, and many
“ tears did I shed to his memory, for I
“ loved him as a son. Heaven now
“ severely

“ severely punished his father for his un-
 “ natural behaviour to him, by depriv-
 “ ing him of this new favourite on
 “ whom he so fondly doated. The boy
 “ died. From that time his health be-
 “ gan to decline. He had only one
 “ child remaining, a daughter, who,
 “ by the death of her brother, was be-
 “ come a rich heiress. Her he married
 “ to the Duke of * * *. His grandson,
 “ Lord Edmond, her second son, was
 “ his favourite; but, notwithstanding
 “ the pleasure he took in him, a weight
 “ of sorrow still hung upon his mind.
 “ Every one ascribed it to the loss of his
 “ son. One day, not very long before
 “ his death, he had a long conference
 “ with his son-in-law the Duke, who left

“ his apartment in visible agitation. He
“ died a few days after. His Grace was
“ so good as to continue me in my em-
“ ployment, by which I have acquired
“ a comfortable fortune. About fifteen
“ or sixteen years ago, as near as I can
“ recollect — indeed the event so much
“ surpris'd me, that it made a deep im-
“ pression on my memory—I one day by
“ accident met in the street Mr. Hervey,
“ (he went, you know, Sir, by that name)
“ who was not so much altered but that
“ I instantly knew him; yet so firmly
“ was I perswaded of his death, that I
“ could scarcely credit my senses. He
“ also recollected me, and immediately
“ asked for my Lord. Alas! said he,
“ they tell me I am his natural son,
“ but

“ but I am sure he has proved an un-
 “ natural father to me. Why Sir, re-
 “ plied I, his Lordship believed you
 “ dead. — No, my friend, he well
 “ knew the contrary : it was reported by
 “ himself, in order to get rid of me. He
 “ purchased me a company in a regi-
 “ giment stationed abroad, and com-
 “ pelled me to take the name of Stanley,
 “ with strong injunctions, accompanied
 “ by threats, never to reveal the name
 “ of my family. With these terms ne-
 “ cessity obliged me to comply. I have
 “ lived abroad ever since, and punctually
 “ obeyed his harsh commands, but my
 “ wife’s declining health obliged me to
 “ return to England. I have, conti-
 “ nued he, lost all the little fortune I
 “ had:

“ had acquired, by being shipwrecked in
“ our passage home. I am born under
“ an unlucky planet, nothing will prof-
“ per I undertake. Finding my father
“ dead, I determined to retire into the
“ country, having sold my commission,
“ and there I wish to live unknowing
“ and unknown.—Here my father,
“ continued Mrs. Hervey, eagerly in-
“ terrupted the old man to bid him re-
“ peat the name his nephew had assumed,
“ and then revealed to him the secret of
“ his being not the *natural*, but *lawful*
“ son and heir to the late Lord Dudley.
“ Nothing could equal Mr. Smith’s
“ astonishment. He readily told my
“ father the name his nephew had taken,
“ which my father having put down, he
“ would

“ would soon, he said, pay him a visit in
 “ the country. Alas! Sir, continued
 “ Mr. Smith, but where will you find
 “ him? From that day to this, I have
 “ never been able to gain the least in-
 “ telligence about him. Perhaps he is
 “ now really dead: but he may have
 “ left children; and as you, Sir, have
 “ acquired so large a fortune, you surely
 “ cannot employ it better than in find-
 “ ing out, and seeing justice done to
 “ your nephew’s family. ——— That I
 “ certainly shall, returned my father,
 “ and nothing shall be omitted, no ex-
 “ pence spared to discover his retreat.
 “ He immediately went to the Duke of
 “ * * *, and communicated to him this
 “ intelligence, producing, at the same
 “ time,

“ time, the certificate of his sister’s
 “ marriage, and also brought the clergy-
 “ man, who was still alive, to witness
 “ the truth of what he asserted. The
 “ Duke affected to make light of the
 “ affair, tho’ the conference, before men-
 “ tioned by the steward, between him
 “ and the late Lord Dudley, gave my
 “ father reason to suppose that nobleman
 “ had intrusted him with the secret.
 “ A very improper person to chuse as
 “ a confidant, since it was so much
 “ for his son Lord Edmond’s interest to
 “ conceal it. In the mean time my
 “ father consulted and engaged in the
 “ cause the most eminent lawyers, and
 “ used all his endeavours to discover
 “ the retreat of his unfortunate nephew,
 “ of

“ of which he does not despair. I left
 “ him intent on this, hitherto, fruitless
 “ search, and most ardently wish he may
 “ be successful in so just a cause.”

Here Mrs. Hervey ended her narrative, in which I found myself uncommonly interested; but this I attributed to my regard for Lord Edmond. Had my father been present, it would have produced a most extraordinary *eclaircissement*, and change in our affairs: but the time was not yet come for this important discovery.

In about a week after this, having had a most delightful voyage, we all landed safely in that sultry clime where the sun delights to shed his most fervent beams. I could scarce support the intense heat,
 tho’

tho' clad in the lightest garments; a thin muslin, sprig'd with silver. Nothing could be more elegant than my dress; and that on a person who, even in England, was reckoned more than tolerable, could not fail to make some figure among the tawny ladies of the East.

Miss Granville and I no sooner set foot on shore, than we found ourselves surrounded with a crowd of gentlemen, who gazed at us with visible admiration. Nay, they did not confine it to looks only, but in pretty audible whispers pronounced us the finest creatures they ever beheld. Angel and goddesses buzzed from every quarter. Mr. Durant, who led us towards the palanquins in which we were to be conveyed to his uncle,

the

the governor, seemed but half delighted with all this applause, and anxiously watched my looks.

“ Ah,” cried he, pressing my hand, “ what a number of rivals do I already find to contend with !”

“ From such rivals as these,” returned I, smiling, “ you have little to apprehend.”

“ Heaven grant it, my adored Sophia !
“ But a thousand fears will mix with a
“ love so perfect as mine.”

“ I have been told, Mr. Durant, that
“ perfect love casteth out fear.”

“ That, my angel, is alone the enviable lot of those who are assured of a
“ return.”

As

As he spoke, our carriages drew near. I was almost afraid to trust myself in them, it was so new, so strange a method of travelling. I trembled when the slaves exalted me on their shoulders. I need not describe to you these machines in which we were whisked along, nor shall I trouble you with a description of the noble city of Bengal, since I know you are, by your extensive reading, better informed of all these particulars than I can possibly make you by my imperfect account.—I should, however, stop, before I reach the governor's, to tell you that, on our landing, I bade a reluctant adieu to my friend Mrs. Hervey, having first settled a correspondence with that amiable woman. Miss Granville, then,
her

her father, and mine, with Mr. Durant, were all our party.

I was struck with astonishment at the grandeur and magnificence of the palace. The furniture was rich beyond any thing you can conceive. My father whispered me, as we passed through the apartments; "What think you, Sophia, of being mistress of this habitation? It is this kind of dwelling you may expect, when you give your hand to the amiable Mr. Durant."

"Ah, Sir," returned I, sighing, "ambition is not my ruling passion!"

My lover was gone before to apprise his uncle of our arrival. He returned, and leading us to the majestic old man, introduced us to him.

Nothing

Nothing could be more hospitable than our reception. In the most obliging manner he insisted on our (that is, my father, and me) taking up our residence in the castle. And soon after, judging we must be fatigued with our journey, ordered us to be conducted to our apartments. This complaisance and particular attention, with which he honored us, we owed, no doubt, to the favourable light in which his nephew had represented us.

Now, my dear Lady Grace, having conveyed you to the Indies, I will, by way of variety, present you with the remainder of my history, by sending you the epistles that passed between me and Mrs. Hervey, from the time of my arrival

val in Bengal, and which she has since returned to me, on my hinting to her that I had some thoughts of amusing myself by writing a sketch of my adventures; the events of my life having been so numerous and diversified that I could not help thinking, if properly tacked together, they would form no contemptible amusement. All the trouble that now remains for me is, to sort the aforesaid letters. I shall not attempt to correct them, but trust to your partial friendship for their favourable reception, with all their errors and imperfections.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER I.

To Mrs. HERVEY.

Bengal.

WITH joy do I begin a correspondence, from which I promise myself so much pleasure. It is the only way to console myself for our cruel separation. Ah, my dear Mrs. Hervey, how much do I regret the loss of your agreeable company! You, indeed, pleaded for Mr. Durant, but it was with the gentle persuasive voice of friendship. My dear father, on the contrary, too anxious for what he believes to be my interest, presses and commands my compliance, with the authority of a parent, which

which I know not how to resist, yet cannot govern the feelings of my heart, which, in spite of Mr. Durant's merit and accomplishments, is still insensible. The governor is acquainted with his nephew's passion, and, in spite of the inequality of fortune, encourages it. Indeed, in this part of the world, our sex, if they are tolerably handsome, are so highly valued that they are themselves esteemed a fortune.

My young head is almost turned with the homage that is paid me. I shall certainly be tempted to fancy my little ladyship a person of vast importance, did not my unfortunate attachment to the dear Lord Edmond convince me that, tho' the flattering, cringing crowd
would

would persuade me I am mistress of their fate, I am, alas! far from being mistress of my own: and, tho' they swear my presence diffuses joy and happiness wherever I appear, I feel it is not in my power to enjoy the least share of it myself.

Last night, for the first time, I went to a public assembly, with Miss Granville and some other ladies. You, my kind partial friend, foresaw, as you humourously said, the dreadful havoc that my charms would make. Indeed the men, here, seem to be much more under the influence of the tender passion than the cool unimpassioned inhabitants of our frozen clime. A fine woman, here, is a little divinity, to whom every heart
pays

pays homage. Conquest is here a thing so common, that I feel the less temptation to triumph in my captives. As you made me promise to be minute, and to tell you every thing that passes, you must attribute the repetition of the compliments I receive, not to vanity, but my punctual compliance with your request, which, to me, shall ever be esteemed a law. Here then I give the reins to *femality*, and shall not even omit my dress, as that, to our sex, is a matter of no small importance: besides, mine was allowed to be well fancied; for we are not tied to the rules of any particular fashion here, but every fair one adorns herself in whatever manner she thinks will display her charms to

most advantage. My hair was carelessly fastened up with a knot of diamonds, a present from the governor. Some of its natural ringlets were suffered to stray over my neck and forehead. Over my hoop, for I wore one, by way of coolness, was a light pink Persian petticoat, flounced with silver blond. My gown, or rather a kind of flowing robe buttoned at the wrist, was of transparent muslin, lightly sprinkled with silver stars. My linen trimmed with the finest lace. My shoes, of thin white taffaty, clasped with a rose of diamonds. In my breast I wore a sprig of myrtle in blossom, and really, upon the whole, I made no contemptible appearance. Mr. Durant was in raptures: his eyes were never off me
the

the whole night. Indeed, if I did not fear to incur the censure of vanity, I might add that those of most of the male creatures kept his in countenance. They flew in crowds to solicit the honor of my hand; but I, you may believe, was engaged before we went. Miss Granville, who is, you know, a fine shewy woman, had also her share of admiration.

We were seated at the head of the room, a compliment to us as strangers. I never saw richer dresses; but the climate is not, I fancy, favourable to beauty. In spite of all their ornaments, I scarce saw one handsome face among the whole set. Really, my dear Mrs. Hervey, if one is to pay so dear for enjoying the chearing rays of the sun, I

shall soon wish to return to England, if I am, like the rest of the inhabitants, to lose my complexion by its scorching beams. Yet I wonder they should be so much tanned, when people of any fashion are so little exposed to it.

I think the heat is not so oppressive as I expected it would: the refreshing breezes keep one from that excessive languor and lazy indolence I imagined would be the consequence of it. And what is very surprising to me, I never saw people dance with more life and spirit than they do here. Mr. Durant, indeed, is not very fond of that amusement, tho' he never appears to more advantage: but he rather wished to entertain me alone, than to see me mix with
the

the sprightly set. This, however, I would not grant. Heaven knows I am too often pestered with his love. Yet, hitherto, tho' he talks extremely well, he talks in vain. But, alas! I find I am no longer left to the freedom of my own will. How, dear Mrs. Hervey, shall I escape this dreaded marriage? It is already the public talk. Mr. Durant, however, vows never to owe my hand to compulsion, but still flatters himself time and assiduity will conquer my indifference. Miss Granville is, in some measure, consoled for his loss by the acquisition of two or three new lovers: yet her eyes plainly declare she still gives him the preference. Indeed, he is by far the most amiable man I have yet seen in this part of the

G 3

world;

world; for I do not think it abounds with either male or female beauties: but what they want in personal graces is abundantly supplied by the politeness of their manners, and the prodigious respect, even to adoration, they pay their fair enslavers, who seem fully sensible of their power, and are the vainest, haughtiest set of females I ever met with. They did not observe the homage paid to me without visible marks of envy: and, what particularly piqued them, was my engrossing the whole attention of so pretty a fellow as Durant. They spared no pains to rob me by their coquetry, and rather forward advances, of my conquest: but, alas! I was not doomed to be so fortunate as to lose him: nay, perhaps

haps if I had, in spite of my indifference, it might have piqued my pride : but I was not to experience the trial.

This morning I have had two or three copies of verses sent me, wherein I am an angel of light, a blazing star, nay a resplendent sun ; a sun whose beams are more penetrating than those which gild our hemisphere. I laughed exceedingly while, at my desire, Mr. Durant read them to me. He was pleased to find they had no other effect than to excite my mirth. Then taking out his pencil, he wrote the following lines :

My Delia must charm ev'ry swain,
 All must my fond passion approve,
 Let her praises resound o'er the plain,
 But I cannot permit them to love.

Let them gaze and with transport admire,
But ne'er hope her fair bosom to move,
Let her beauty their verses inspire,
But I must not permit them to love.

These verses are not extraordinary; but as they were wrote extempore, they claim your indulgence, and ought to escape a too severe criticism. His fame, in the poetical way, was before so well established, that trifles themselves seem elegant, when they drop from the pen of one who has given so many proofs of his excelling in that pleasing art.

A crowd of company obliges me to leave you, tho' not without the most sensible reluctance.

Adieu.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

To Mrs. H E R V E Y.

A H, my dear Mrs. Hervey, how impatiently do I long for the arrival of that letter which you tell me you every moment expect from England! Do not, my dear friend, fail to send me all the intelligence it contains in regard to the amiable Edmond. Alas! he has by this time, no doubt, completed the wishes of my too fortunate rival. Were I assured of this, I think I should no longer be able to withstand the pressing importunities of my father and Mr. Durant; but while there is a shadow of hope that he continues single,

G 5

how

how can I bestow myself on another? Nay, I do not think myself at liberty. Nothing but his inconstancy can free me from my solemn engagement with that most lovely of men, and never, indeed, can I take the fatal step I am urged to with the consent of my heart. But since I cannot flatter myself with the prospect of being happy, I ought, at least, to study the happiness of others, especially that of a parent so justly dear to me; and this, he assures me, depends on my union with the man of his choice.

The governor is no less urgent for, what he is pleased to call, his nephew's felicity. I am teased from morning till night on this subject. Mr. Durant, however,

however, repeatedly assures me he will patiently wait till time and his unabated love soften me in his favour. This he has told both my father and his uncle; yet does it not wholly free me from their well-meant persecution. Tho' I am by most people supposed to be engaged to him, it has not prevented others from offering themselves. Some of the most considerable men in the place have thought me worthy their addresses, and have solicited my father's approbation; but that, you may believe, they were refused. Notwithstanding this repulse they have wrote to me, presuming, as they tell me in their epistles, on my known indifference for Mr. Durant. This information, I suspect, they must

have received from Miss Granville, who would stop at nothing to prevent the match. I have, however, in my answers effectually discouraged their hopes; assuring them, however indifferent they might suppose him to me, he yet possessed my highest esteem, and was, besides, by far the most amiable man I had seen in that part of the world. That I was not, indeed, at present inclined to change my state; but when I did, his merit, and the duty I owed to the best of parents, would certainly intitle him to the preference of all those who had honored me with their addresses since my arrival in India. These epistles will, I hope, free me for the future from any farther solicitations of this nature, which, however
they

they may flatter my vanity, are, in the present situation of my heart, extremely disagreeable. Were I at liberty to chuse, it should (since the loss of the only man I ever did or can love) be that of living single: but this my father opposes with so many sage arguments, that I dare hardly venture to hint at it. Yet, now he is in so fair a way of advancing his fortune, and by that means of rendering me independent, why should he oppose my inclinations? Poverty alone subjected me to the insults I have met with: from adventures of that nature riches will now effectually secure me. But the truth is, Mr. Durant has, by his engaging behaviour, gained such an ascendancy over him, that he seems to prefer his happiness

ness even to that of his daughter, or rather he thinks mine must be secured by an alliance to so much merit. I wish I could bring myself to be of his opinion.

On Monday we accompany the governor to his country seat, which they tell me is a perfect paradise. Mr. Durant is impatient for our departure, as he then hopes to enjoy more of my company. I see, also, that he has a tincture of jealousy in his composition, and that it is with great uneasiness he beholds the affluence of my other admirers: tho' my behaviour to them ought to make him perfectly tranquil on that head, since I listen to them with such unaffected indifference, that I have gained the name of the Fair Insensible. Nay, they pronounce

nounce me born with a heart incapable of feeling the tender passion. Ah, how little do they know me! My heart, indeed, is formed only for deep and lasting impressions: it is incapable of that commodious levity which would permit it to change the object of its attachment like that of some Ladies I have heard of, who think one agreeable man as good as another, and who, perhaps, see fifty, among whom they hardly know to which to give the preference. These, in reality, are the people whose hearts are not formed for love. That we can but once experience this passion, is a doctrine in which I shall live and die.

To night I am to accompany Miss Granville (who is my *friend as it were*,

or

or at least my constant companion ; from what motives you may easily guess) to a private assembly, given, as she insinuates, on her account, and at which she does not a little triumph. Mr. Durant made a thousand objections to my going, as business of importance will prevent his being of the party ; but she would take no denial, so I must leave you to dress for the occasion. She whispered as she took leave, “ You shall “ to night see such a man ! Take care “ of your heart, Sophia, for his charms “ have by most of our ladies been pronounced irresistible.” Tho’ she spoke this in a low voice, Mr. Durant heard enough to make him uneasy. I asked the cause of his dejection : he was
ashamed

ashamed to confess his weakness, - afraid to incur my displeasure by his unreasonable jealousy. — Ah, it is not in this country he need fear a rival!

“O, Sophia,” sighed he, taking my hand, “would to heaven you were less lovely!”

“And I,” cried the governor smiling, “would not for the world she were any thing but just what she is. She makes no ungenerous use of her power, for

“Favours to none, to all she smiles extends :

“Oft she rejects, but never once offends.”

A very gallant speech, you must allow, my dear Mrs. Hervey. — But while I sit chatting to you, I forget that my toilet demands my presence. Adieu

L E T T E R

LETTER III.

To the same.

MISS Granville had reason to say I should see an agreeable man. Nothing can be more so than Colonel Rivers. His person is graceful and handsome: he has great sweetness in his manners, mixed with a gaiety which, without degenerating into levity, is extremely pleasing. He neither speaks too little nor too much: expresses himself with ease, and what he says amuses. This gentleman did me the honor to engage me for his partner. Miss Granville appeared in high spirits. I suspect she has a plot in introducing him to my acquaintance.

tance. Perhaps she hopes he will be able to supplant Mr. Durant; or, rather, that he will gain that heart which has hitherto been insensible to the other's merit, and in that case she may indulge the hope of gaining him for herself. This, however, is only a conjecture, which her behaviour at the assembly gave rise to. It is certain she seemed uncommonly pleased at the Colonel's assiduity, and the complacency with which I listened to him. This complaisance was a just tribute to his merit, and what I felt the less reluctance to grant, as he had too much delicacy and true politeness to pester me with those unmeaning and common-place compliments with which the other gentlemen have been accustomed to

to torment me. His conversation was spirited and sensible, his sentiments on every subject just and refined. Upon my word, he is an amiable man. I know not when I spent a more agreeable evening. I could wish to rank the colonel among the number of my friends, and for this reason, that he does not seem solicitous to be regarded in any other light. It is disgusting to be for ever addressed in the language of flattery: one is debarred from enjoying that pleasure and advantage which we might otherwise reap from the conversation of the other sex. By their thinking it a necessary mark of gallantry to profess themselves our admirers, they do not seem to think us worthy of being treated as rational creatures.

tures. If we have not beauty to awaken their passion, we scarce attract the least share of their notice; and if we have, they think it sufficient to pay homage to our charms without a single compliment to our understanding, to which this pretended homage is often an insult.

Not long before the assembly broke up, Mr. Durant made his appearance. I happened at the time to be seated by the side of the gay colonel, whose red coat, said to be so much a favourite colour of the ladies, was of itself enough to excite uneasiness in one of my admirer's jealous disposition; what then must be its effect when worn by a person so every way graceful and engaging? The effect it produced on Mr. Durant was too visible,
at

at least to me. He could scarce be commonly civil to my partner, nor was even his address to me such as might have been expected from one who wished to gain an interest in my heart. He looked pale with anger. Yet what had I done to displease him? How odious is jealousy! And what right has he to be jealous? I do not conceal from him my real sentiments. He knows my attachment to Lord Edmond. I have a thousand times assured him I cannot conquer it, or, if I could, it should be in his favour, who, next to him, I most esteem. How dare he then affront me by supposing me capable of a partiality for any other object? Does he judge of me by himself? He, indeed, may change;
but

but if he does, then he knows not what it is to love like me.—I own I was piqued at his ungenerous suspicions, and took but little pains to conceal my displeasure. This widened the breach. He pouted, and played off a few fullen airs. I talked to the colonel without seeming to regard him: he then, by way of mortifying me, addressed himself to Miss Granville, who would, I make no doubt, take all imaginable care to confirm his jealousy. In fine, he suffered my partner to lead me to our carriage, and, when seated by me in it, scarce vouchsafed to open his lips, sighed, groaned, and at length burst out into invectives against the caprice, the cruelty of our sex. Miss Granville laughed
and

and rallied him on his ill-humour. I carelessly hummed a tune, tho' no great harmony in my mind.

On this he lost all patience; but having raved himself out of breath, his temper took another turn. He suddenly dropped on his knees, seized my hand, and with violent emotions besought my pardon for his rudeness. He was not master of himself, he said, his passion got the better of his reason: he rather deserved my pity than displeasure: no man ever doated on woman as he doated on me. He continued to press my hands to his lips with such eagerness, that he absolutely hurt me. I endeavoured to withdraw them.

“ You

“ You think meanly of me, Sir,” said I, weeping. “ I am little obliged to you “ for a passion which is not accompa- “ nied by esteem. I should be afraid to “ unite myself to one of your jealous “ disposition: it would be a continual “ source of misery to both.”

“ Ah, Madam, if I could but hope “ for the least return to that ardent pas- “ sion — but cruel doubt is the source “ of all my apprehensions.”

“ And do you think to inspire that “ return, by the strange airs you give “ yourself? I have often told you, there “ is but one person on earth whom I “ prefer to you. Time and absence “ might have conquered that fatal at- “ tachment, had you continued the ami-

“able lover you at first appeared; but
 “you have too soon thrown off the
 “mask.”

I will not trouble my dear Mrs. Hervey with all that passed on the occasion. —When we reached the governor’s, my father became his advocate, and by his mediation effected a reconciliation; but we were this morning in danger of renewing the quarrel, on my receiving a visit from the Colonel. However, soon after, our jaunt to the country becoming the subject, his countenance brightened, and the storm blew off.

The important letter not yet arrived from England! Ah, my dear Mrs. Hervey, how impatiently do I long for its arrival! Yet I tremble to think of the
 consequence

consequence that may ensue from its contents, if Lord Edmond is married. And how dare I flatter myself that he is not? In that case I shall no longer have a pretence to delay giving my consent to marry Mr. Durant. My father has so far indulged my caprice, as he unjustly calls it, as to suffer me to wait till I know the fate of my amiable Edmond; but when once that is known, he will compel me to fulfil the promise he has extorted from me, that if his Lordship has given his hand to Miss G—, I shall then give mine to his favourite. —

Dreadful!—I tremble at the thought!—

But, alas! my doom is irrevocably fixed.

—Yet, be the consequence what it will, fail not, my dear friend, to send me the

intelligence I so ardently long for. Remember, if a certain event must take place, your presence alone can support me under the dreadful trial.—There is no bearing this subject.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

To the same.

WE are, at length, arrived at this terrestrial paradise. I never beheld any thing equal to it. England is a mere wilderness, when compared to this charming country. I begin to be accustomed to its excessive heat, and even find it agreeable; for we have every conveniency to prevent its incommoding us. Our evening walks are enchanting. We are engaged in a constant scene of amusements, which are varied with great taste, and all conducted with the utmost elegance.—Our concerts are, to me, particularly pleas-

H 3

ing.

ing. We have them in a beautiful little wood, not far from the house: the trees are hung with lamps, which render this sweet retreat light as day: the birds join their melodious voices to compleat the harmony.

The governor has brought with him a select party of friends, both male and female, to enliven this charming retreat. We have balls quite in the rural style. Our dresses, on these occasions, are simple, but elegant. In short, this place may justly be called the new Arcadia. All are at liberty to follow their inclinations in the disposal of their time. Restraint is banished from all but me, whom they, nevertheless, pretend they are most solicitous to amuse. — Alas!

my

my heart refuses to partake of their gaiety.

Till last night, Mr. Durant's behaviour was unexceptionable : till then, indeed, he saw no one that could excite his jealousy. His uncle took care to choose his party, in such a manner, as to leave him no room to fear rivals : we were then on very friendly terms. He, passionate ; I, complaisant. It was all I could bestow. When, behold, yesterday, Miss Granville, and the formidable colonel made their appearance to disturb our repose ! The polite assiduity of the latter to me, instantly changed my lover's humour, and sullen discontent usurped the place of his late pleasing vivacity. Yet I carefully guard-

ed both my looks and expressions.
But

“Trifles, light as air,
“Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
“As proofs of holy writ.”

He was extremely offended on my condescending to sing, on the colonel's requesting that favour; but, on my accepting a nosegay, which he had gathered for me, he lost all patience.

I had placed it in my breast: he insisted on my exchanging it for one he had brought me. What unreasonable caprice! I would not indulge his humour. He walked from me in fullen discontent, his arms folded.—I pity him—Yet, when he so well knows the torments of love, when he finds it so difficult to govern
his

his passion, why does he not make some allowance for me, who have not concealed from him the true state of my heart? Why, I say, does he persecute me? — He thinks me ungrateful. — For what? — For not returning his selfish passion. He says he prefers my happiness to his own; but does not his whole conduct contradict his assertion?

Our new guests do not meet with the most cordial reception: — they stay, nevertheless.

Miss Granville tells me the colonel is enchanted with me, and that he talks perpetually of my charms. To me, however, he talks on more interesting subjects. He is engaging, polite, and studious to please; but I am much mistaken

mistaken if he has any thoughts of becoming my lover; and, for that very reason, I am fond of his company.—I hate love. Ah, would to heaven I had never experienced its pleasing pains!

O, my dear Mrs. Hervey, your packet is just brought me! I tremble—I dread to open it. By its size, I guess it brings me the long-expected, important intelligence from England.—The seal is broken—and Edmond, if thou art married, then is my fate determined.

Ah! no mention of this, to me, so interesting an article!—"Your father, "wholly engrossed by his nephew's affairs, "says nothing of that event.—What do "you tell me? The duke dead! Lord "Edmond at liberty to choose whom he "pleases!

"pleases!"—Ah, no doubt, that choice is long, ere now, irrevocably fixed!—Time and absence—I dare not indulge the shadow of hope.

"Your father, you tell me, wrote
 "in a hurry: he had not time to
 "relate to you a secret the duke re-
 "vealed to him on his death-bed: he
 "only informs you he now knows
 "where to find the lawful heir: that
 "Lord Edmond has acted with uncom-
 "mon generosity:"—Ah, of that I
 make no doubt.—"That you may soon
 "expect to see this worthy father of
 "yours, and that he is preparing for
 "his voyage."

Alas, my dear Mrs. Hervey, how unsatisfactory to me is this intelligence!

yet am I equally obliged to you.—
Here comes my father.

I have presented to him your letter.
—Ah, madam, what think you is the
consequence?—He will no longer allow
me a respite, though on my knees I
besought it.

“ Foolish girl,” cried he, with indig-
nation : “ what would you wait for ?
“ Lord Edmond has forfeited his for-
“ tune : interest will now compel him
“ to accept Miss G— : nay, I make
“ no doubt but they are, ere now,
“ united. He has long since giv-
“ en you up ; why then will you
“ continue to flatter yourself with de-
“ lusive hopes ? I have too long in-
“ dulg'd your caprice : my resolution

“ is

“ is now unalterably fixed. Prepare
 “ then, chearfully, to comply with your
 “ duty. Trifle not with your happi-
 “ nefs, but receive, with gratitude, the
 “ blessing heaven is pleased to bestow
 “ on you.”

Ah, my dear Mrs. Hervey, I cannot conquer my repugnance. I will intreat Mr. Durant to intercede for me; at least, to gain time, that I may, if possible, reconcile myself to my fate.

Adieu. In the humour I am in, I know not what I write: I ought, therefore, to release you from the penance of reading this wearisome epistle.

LETTER

LETTER V.

To the same.

MR. Durant has had the goodness to intercede for me : he has gained me a month's respite ; but then my fate is absolutely determined.—Ah, how swiftly will the hasty minutes wing their flight ! How soon will the dreaded time arrive !—He makes a great merit of this sacrifice, as he calls it, and expects that I will, in return, treat him with less reserve than I have hitherto done.—What would he have ? Am I not compelled to listen to him from morning till night ? But he is displeased, because I also sometimes listen to
the

the colonel. — How can I help myself, must I be deaf to all but him? Miss Granville torments me too. She insists upon it, that the colonel has a passion for me: — He does not tell me so himself. So much the better. I should detest him, if he joined to teaze me: But he is all politeness, and seeks only to amuse. I have no longer the least tincture of coquetry in my composition. I wonder what pleasure our sex can find in a crowd of captives. They are, to me, the most tiresome creatures in the world. They embarrass and plague me to death with their caprice and jealousy. I find it a hard task to manage one, so as to keep him in any tolerable order. Durant has more whims than
any

any man I ever met with. Heavens ! what will become of me if I am, at length, compelled to marry him ? Yet, till he was seized with this wild untractable passion, he really appeared extremely amiable and accomplished ; but now he is a perfect Don Felix, I can neither look nor speak without giving offence. He was violently disconcerted last night, for no reason in the world, but because I danced a minuet with the Colonel : yet he does not, himself, like dancing, which is my favourite amusement ; he, therefore, expects me to sit still.—Ridiculous !

The colonel happened to praise my dress, which, he said, was uncommonly becoming. I inadvertently appeared in
the

the same next morning. This was the cause of a very serious quarrel between us. I never shewed, he said, so much complaisance to *his* taste. He had even remarked I had never worn blue ribbons since he told me they gave an additional fairness to my complexion.—What a whimsical remark! It was so ridiculous and unjust that I could not help laughing. He, however, was far from joining in my mirth. He soon after gathered me a nosegay. The scent of the orange-flower was too strong, it gave me the head-ach. I threw it away. The colonel picked it up, and wore it at dinner. Mr. Durant observed it: he turned pale, and almost fainted. I sat next him terrified to death at the condition

dition in which I saw him; and, in a hurry to relieve him, threw a whole bottle of hungary-water on his face.—He recovered, but was almost suffocated with the strength of my remedy. Miss Granville whispered me; “Now I hope you will allow he is a sweet man.” He was far from being grateful for my care. There is no such thing as pleasing the capricious creature. He sullenly retired to his apartment. My father was violently uneasy at his indisposition. We saw him not again the whole evening. It was, for that reason, one of the most tranquil I have passed for some time. The colonel read to Miss Granville and me, while we were employed in sorting some fine shells, of which I
am

am very fond, and, of which, with the assistance of my female friends, I am making a pretty grotto in the garden; the taste of which has been much admired. The colonel has a fine clear voice, and reads inimitably. I wonder Miss Granville does not rather endeavour to make him her slave, than the untractable mortal neither she nor I can manage. — But, ah, do I not know, from fatal experience, that love is involuntary?

I long exceedingly for the arrival of your father. If he set off soon after his last letter, it cannot be long before you have the felicity to see him. I feel myself in a kind of uneasy suspense. — Foolish creature! What do I wait

wait for, what do I expect? — Why, my dear friend, I can talk to him of Lord Edmond. I shall then know— Ah, it will not now admit a doubt— No more then on this distressing subject.

It is said, that those who have no real misfortunes, will create imaginary ones. When I was plunged in afflictions, my passion was comparatively weak : released from those afflictions, it now wholly engrosses my attention.—There is no necessity, however, that it should also engross yours ; therefore,

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

YOU are astonished at my long silence — Ah, my dear friend, would to heaven some one had been so charitable as to have informed you of the cause. I am so well convinced of your goodness and regard for me, that I think you would have favoured me with a visit during my illness. — Yes, my dear Mrs. Hervey, I have been extremely ill, at the point of death, of a violent fever. My father and lover despaired of my life. You may better imagine than I can describe their anguish. They now, however, begin to indulge hopes of my recovery. Nothing remains of my indisposition, but an excessive

five languor and weakness. I now begin to feel the inconveniency of the oppressive heat : it quite overpowers me, though all imaginable pains are taken to moderate it. Several female slaves are perpetually employed in fanning me. I have great compassion for these unfortunate creatures whom we deprive of that greatest of all blessings, liberty. It is a species of cruelty which I abhor. I have, since my arrival here, used my utmost endeavours to soften, by my kindness, the severity of their fate. Are they not my fellow creatures ? I have even procured, by my interest with the governor, some indulgences for his slaves, which render their captivity less irksome than that of many others.

I know

I know not how this subject came to run away with my pen, but my late sufferings have taught me more than ever to compassionate those of others. It is above a fortnight since the commencement of my illness. Alas, how much of my precious respite from a still hated marriage is here elapsed! The dreaded time now approaches, yet am I far as ever from being reconciled to my fate. There is, however, no remedy: I have given my promise, and must fulfil it.

My indisposition prevented my telling you Miss Granville's conjectures were not without foundation. The Colonel, one evening, finding me alone, ventured, tho' with the utmost delicacy and respect,

spect, to declare himself my lover. I heard him without interruption: indeed it was not in my power to interrupt him. His voice, his manner were so like Lord Edmond's on a similar occasion—There is no describing the effect it had on me.—I burst into tears. Alarmed, astonished at this extraordinary emotion, he eagerly besought me to acquaint him with the cause of my grief. I thought him worthy my confidence, nor was I mistaken. He knows Lord Edmond, he respects my sorrow, and is determined to suffer in silence. Vowing on my hand, which he pressed to his lips, never more to distress me by a declaration of his passion, since I had convinced him he must not hope for a return. “Yet,”
added

added he, " what better right has Mr.
" Durant than me to aspire to that felicity
" which I would die to purchase?"

" The sanction of my father's appro-
" bation, Sir."

" Ungenerous man!" cried he indig-
" nantly; " and can he be so selfish as
" to study only his own happiness; or
" rather can he be happy when he re-
" ceives you only from the arbitrary au-
" thority of a parent? And will you,
" lovely Sophia, consent to this sacrifice?"

" Ah, Sir, I have promised: I dare
" not dispute the will of my father, whom
" I have been ever accustomed to obey."

The entrance of Miss Granville here,
put a stop to our conversation: the Co-
lonel seemed inclined to continue it, but

I made a sign that she was not to be trusted.

Some regimental business next day obliged this amiable man to bid us adieu. He found an opportunity to whisper me as he took leave, "Should you stand in need of a friend, to rescue you from the power of a father too tenacious of his authority, in me, adorable Sophia, you shall find one ready to serve you, tho' at the hazard of my life."

What a proposal!—Ah, does he think I will apply to him in such a case?

It is with difficulty, my dear Mrs. Hervey, I have been able to write these few lines. I find it impossible to add any more but sincere wishes for your happiness. Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

To the same.

I MUST, my dear Mrs. Hervey, however reluctantly, acquiesce in the just reasons you give for not honoring me with your company, nor have I now my illness to plead as an inducement for you to grant me that favour; but ah, my friend, an event still more affecting to me makes me, much more than when at the point of death, stand in need of your company. The fatal day is at last fixed wherein my happiness or misery, and that for life, will be determined. — I know not how they extorted my consent. I am quite stupid, they do with me what they please. I do not

think my senses are perfectly restored. It is well for me they are not: it prevents my feeling, as I should otherwise do, the horrors of my situation. What can equal the misery of bestowing ones hand where the heart is averse? — I am not capable of reflection. I am quite passive. My lover is continually at my feet. He talks, I neither hear nor attend to any thing. I do not even weep. He thinks he has at last conquered my repugnance. — Ah, how much is he mistaken! But I have not spirits to contend with him. Let them act as they please, I alone shall be the sufferer. Be it so: I obey my rigid duty. My father is happy: this at least is a consolation. The Governor loads me with presents: I know not
what

what they are, finery has no longer any charms for me.—Alas! one smile of the dear Edmond is more precious to me than all the wealth of the Indies. But that is a felicity I shall never again enjoy. His lovely image haunts me perpetually. I talk to him as if really present: a proof that my head is disordered. Is it not ungenerous to take advantage of the situation to which I am reduced?—Next Monday——Good heavens!—Impossible. Surely I am tormented with a frightful dream—I will go and enquire.—I know not what I write.

Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

I AM just recovered from a fit, but I am now, alas, perfectly in every respect restored to my senses. I fainted on being obliged to sign the fatal writings. To-morrow is the dreaded day when I must for ever bid adieu to love, when I must tear from my bleeding heart the long-cherished image of my Edmond. Every one is busy in making the hated preparations: the whole country seems in motion. Ah, I find no charms in the distinction that is paid me: a cottage, with the man I love, would be preferable to all this empty parade, this unsatisfactory grandeur.

Why

Why are you not here, my most valued friend, to support my drooping spirits? Of what consolation does your father's delay deprive me! You tell me you have a thousand apprehensions for his safety. You ought not to indulge them: the weather has been too fine to leave you any just cause to fear those storms and tempests with which your imagination torments you. A few days will put you out of pain, while *my* misery, alas! is but commencing.

A letter is this moment brought me. I am a stranger to the hand. Who on earth can it be from? The sight of it causes an unusual emotion. My nerves are so weak, that every thing now alarms me.—Ah! what can this mean? It is

from the Colonel. — I am amazed at the contents. Read, my dear Mrs. Hervey, and see if I have not cause.

Letter from Colonel Rivers.

“ I AM just returned from an excursion I have been obliged to make into the country, and the first news I heard on my arrival here was, that your intended union with Mr. Durant is fixed for to-morrow. Is it possible? — I put my own sufferings on this occasion quite out of the question, since I must aspire to no more than the honor of being your friend; but, for your own sake, lovely Sophia, I conjure you delay your nuptials. I have not at present time to explain my reason
“ for

“ for so (as it must appear) extraordi-
 “ nary a request, being obliged to dis-
 “ patch this, quick as possible, lest it
 “ come too late. — Only believe me,
 “ amiable Sophia, that it is for your
 “ sake alone, I solicit this delay. A few
 “ days will unravel the mystery. I must
 “ not be too explicit, lest I should in-
 “ spire delusive hopes. — You would
 “ pity me, you would even favour me
 “ with some share of your esteem, did
 “ you know the painful struggles it has
 “ cost me to conquer my fervent
 “ passion : but a passion like mine
 “ will ever study the happiness of the
 “ object that inspired it, more than its
 “ own gratification. — Ah, can it ex-
 “ perience a greater than that of pro-
 “ moting

“moting your felicity? Once more I
“conjure you, form some pretence to
“delay your marriage. Adieu : be af-
“sured, this advice comes from your
“most disinterested friend.”

But how, how my dear Mrs. Hervey, will it be in my power to follow this advice? It is already late in the day : what pretence can I form? A feigned indisposition will not pass : my looks, my physicians will betray me. My looks, did I say? No, they would favour my design.—But then a slight illness will not give me a respite ; and should I affect one more dangerous, they will torment me with medicines. — What shall I do? There is so little time for deliberation—I die to know why the
colonel

colonel solicits this delay. Why did he not explain himself? My heart is in a tumult. I never experienced more violent emotions—but they are not unpleasing. A ray of hope—yet what can I hope for?—Why do the moments so rapidly wing their flight?—I can determine on nothing. —I never, till now, knew I was so barren in invention. Such a stupid creature! Shall I apply to Mr. Durant?—He will accuse me of caprice: he will not listen to me. Solicitous only for his own happiness, I dare not flatter myself he will grant my request.—What will people think?—Every thing ready for the dreaded solemnity, the company invited—Ah, my fate is inevitable.—Why did the colonel so long delay?—But

he was absent. Alas! I puzzle and distract my head with unavailing reflections.—I am determined.—I will speak to my father. He shall either grant me a respite, or be witness to my death.—No, they shall not drag me to the altar. I will not pronounce the fatal vows. Let them but wait till this mystery is explained, and then I will yield obedience to inexorable duty.

Adieu. I go to try my influence on a parent who was once so studious of his daughter's peace.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

To the same.

THEY are deaf to my prayers.—

Ah, my inflexible father ! why, will you drive me to this extremity ? You have set me an example of cruel obstinacy. My tears, my intreaties could not move you ! Mr. Durant, alone, engrosses your affections ; my happiness is no longer dear to you.—Was my request so very unreasonable ? — A few days—you will grant nothing to me ; yet expect implicit obedience on *my* part.—I am in despair.—I care not what I do.

Do not too severely condemn me, *my* only friend. I fear you will, when you
know

know the extraordinary step I am going to take; but consider my provocation, and pity me. I tremble, I want courage to attempt it: yet what else is left me? —I will go down to the grove, and there revolve on this but imperfectly-concerted scheme. May heaven direct my wandering steps. Ah, perhaps I shall never return to a house where so much misery awaits me. Why will they force me to so dreadful an expedient? Fatal obstinacy! Adieu.—There is no describing the anguish I suffer.

LETTER

LETTER X.

To the same.

WHAT a change!—Hardly can I credit my senses. Such a surprising, such an unexpected event! How shall I so far calm my joyful emotions as to give you the particulars?

Dear Mrs. Hervey, I am too, too happy. Every object smiles around me. All nature now seems more adorned and lovely. That garden, entered not long since overwhelmed with grief, now appears to me the abode of some benevolent being, who has withdrawn the veil which had so long hid my happiness from me.—Would you believe it? I had,

had, in my despair, determined on flight. —Ah, I shudder at the consequence of such a step, which nothing but that despair could excuse, even for one moment, my indulging the thought of. But heaven did not abandon me to the guidance of my distracted reason. At the moment I thought myself the most wretched, I was fated to experience the most exquisite felicity.—The sudden, the unexpected change was almost too much for my agitated spirits.—I fainted in the arms of — would you believe it? —in the arms of Lord Edmond! —Yes, it was himself, that adored lover, whose constancy bids defiance to time and absence.—Judge of my astonishment, the tumult of my joy,

at meeting him in the wood adjoining to the house, accompanied by the colonel! —He saw, and instantly knew me. He sprung forward: but, at that moment, I lost the faculty of sight and hearing, and, for some time, remained insensible to all his endearing caresses. He soon, however, recalled me to a sense of my inexpressible happiness. The colonel's friendly heart seemed to partake of our transports. He warmly congratulated us on our mutual felicity.

My lover had still another agreeable surprise for me. Your father, my dear Mrs. Hervey, has, no doubt, ere this, informed you that mine, is that nephew, that heir of whom he has so long been
in

in search.—Lord Edmond, at my feet, besought my pardon, for having so many years (though innocently) deprived me of my right.—Do you suppose he had twice to solicit that pardon? O no, I raised my charming cousin; and, by words and looks that threw him into raptures, expressed my joy at having so amiable a relation.—Soon, very soon, my friend, shall we be more nearly, more endearingly connected. To express my father's surprise at the discovery, is not in the power of language. He never entertained a doubt of being any thing more than the natural son of the late Lord Dudley. That he was the lawful heir, was the secret which his Lordship, when at the point of death, communicated to
the

the duke of ***: a secret which, for Lord Edmond's sake, he was so unjust as to conceal, till he found himself dying; then his conscience smote him, then he repented his injustice, and made a full confession. He then owned that, on your father's arrival in England, and espousing his nephew's cause, he had been no less industrious than him, to find out the place of his retreat, but that he had not been so successful; that he got my father into his power, as I have before related to you; and, lastly, that he had prevailed on him to go abroad, where he had genteely provided for him, and had hopes he would not return to England, at least, for some years; in which

which time, he imagined, it would be no difficult matter to persuade your father of his death, or, at least, to relinquish his fruitless search. But why, my dear cousin (for such I find you are) do I trouble you with all these particulars, since you are, by this time, no doubt, as well informed of them as myself?—Your father has also told you, that the generous Lord Edmond was determined to come here in person, to resign to mine that fortune to which he is no longer intitled. This, however, was not the only motive of his voyage.—No, let me flatter myself that it was partly on account of your happy friend.—What a reverse of fortune! I am no longer that obscurely-born,

born, humble country maid.—The title of Lady is added to dignify my name.—Lady Sophia! Oh how agreeable is the sound!—Yet believe me, the only pleasure these honours give me, is, that of their rendering me more worthy, or, at least, more on an equality with my amiable lover.—I need now no longer fear that his high and mighty relations will look down upon me with contempt: my birth is equal, and my fortune more splendid than his, or even that of Miss G—, of whose alliance they were so solicitous.

I asked Lord Edmond what was become of that enemy to my peace, and he told me she is married: that, mortified at his unconquerable indifference, she in a pique

pique bestowed her fair hand on Sir Richard Melvil. But I can gain very few particulars of this nature from him; his unabated passion for me, engrosses his whole attention: it is his constant theme. With what fire does he paint that dear passion! How often does he swear that his happiness, that his life depends on my returning his love! How melting are his looks! How ardent his expressions! The very sound of his voice penetrates my soul. Ah, how delightfully does time now wing its flight! There is no alloy to my happiness, which would indeed otherwise be too perfect for this state of mortality, but for the affliction into which this event has plunged Mr. Durant.

O'er-

O'erwhelm'd with despair, he last night set off for one of his country seats, telling me, when he took leave, that he found himself compelled to abandon a place, where every object that presented itself to his eyes, nourished his affliction, and reminded him of that bliss which was now, alas! lost to him for ever. I wept. I assured him of my friendship, my esteem, but I did not press him to stay, as his presence was a painful restraint. I durst not give a loose to my joy, lest I should seem to insult his misery.

My father was exceedingly afflicted at his departure; but, as Lord Edmond had received his promise that I should be his, long before either of us had seen

Mr.

Mr. Durant, neither the governor nor he could blame his fulfilling his engagement; nay the former is so polite as to insist on our nuptials being celebrated at this place, as every thing is prepared for the solemnity, tho' one of the party is changed. I had collected all Mr. Durant's presents, as well as the splendid ones I received from his uncle, and in the most respectful manner offered to return them, but neither of them would suffer this restitution, which makes me extremely uneasy. Obligations of this nature are, in the present situation of affairs, excessively oppressing. Lord Edmond is of the same opinion, and is determined to make them accept others of equal value. He pities Mr. Durant, and while

while he was here, with a delicacy and generosity of which he alone is capable, restrained the overflowings of his heart, and in his presence checked his transports that he might not appear to triumph.

He is here. He will not suffer me to continue this employment; but I must and will add, that no marriage, no feasts, no balls shall take place till you, my dear cousin, grace them with your presence. In this determination I am fixed as fate, tho' my other new-found cousin vows he will make me break it; but it is not yet his turn to reign: at present I am his sovereign mistress.

I was going to bid you hasten his coming, but fear you may now be so spiteful as to fancy I have other motives

for wishing your speedy arrival besides the pleasure of your company: think as you please, but come, nevertheless.

My respects to your father. Mine is now engaged in writing to him.—Heavens, what a crowd of dear relations have started up at once to make me the happiest of my sex!—This teasing impertinent drags me from you.

Adieu.

Here

Here end my letters, dear Lady Grace, and I must now again resume the narrative. But are you not already weary? Courage, you have almost reached the end of your journey. I shall huddle over the rest as quick as possible, for when once one is married, you know, the novel is at an end.

Behold me then in that situation, and in my own opinion, which is all in all, the happiest of my sex. Lord Edmond, tho' a husband, still continuing as fond, as passionate, as when a lover. My father enjoying and diffusing happiness to all around him, by means of his splendid fortune: respected, carested. My little Ladyship almost adored. Balls, feasts—almost surfeited with pleasure.

In reality I longed to return to dear England; tho' I should not then, I knew, receive half so much homage. But that of my Edmond, of which I judged myself pretty secure, was alone sufficient to satisfy my ambition. I was weary of the tumult of amusements we were obliged to engage in at the castle: I wished to enjoy more of my amiable husband's society, without the interruption of company, who were not able to make me amends for the pleasure of which they deprived me. Lord Edmond was no less impatient to re-visit his native country.—To be short, about a month after our nuptials we bade a long, a last adieu to the Indies. Having testified, by every means in our power, the grateful

ful sense we had of the governor's favours, and I having also shed a few tears to the memory of my unfortunate lover, whose fruitless passion, however, I made no doubt but time and absence would conquer, we embarked, accompanied by Mrs. Hervey and her father, had a favourable voyage, and, after the usual time, safely landed on our native shore, the happy land of liberty, which banishment had endeared to me, and where I now hoped to taste that felicity which the want of friends and fortune had before denied to me.

We took a most elegant house. All the world came to congratulate us: amongst the rest the Duke of ****, attended by Lord Edmond's brother, who gallantly

said, if Lord Edmond had not got the start of him, he should himself have been tempted to aspire to the felicity he enjoyed in the possession of his lovely cousin, as he was pleased to call me. All, indeed, were so polite as to testify their approbation of his choice, and lavished a thousand encomiums on my pretended beauty, a flattery that was still more grateful to my dear, amiable husband than to me; for it was him alone I wished to please.

The first publick place I went to was the play. Nothing could be more brilliant than my appearance, sparkling with jewels. Chance directed us to the very next box in which Miss G——, now Lady Melvil and her husband were seated.

ed. I thought she would have fainted when she saw me come in led by my lovely Edmond. Never did I see such malignant envy as appeared in her countenance. Lord G—— and his worthy Lady were also of their party. They both paid their compliments to us with the greatest respect. I experienced some disagreeable emotions on seeing a person from whom I had received so many indignities ; but, safe under the protection of my husband, I soon conquered my agitations, and, secure in conscious innocence, resumed my dignity and composure.

It was not so with him. His countenance appeared an air of penitent humility. I almost pitied his visible confusion.

Lord Edmond observed it, and, by his amiable politeness, kindly endeavoured to dispel those mortifying reflections which the sight of one whom he had so greatly injured inspired.

“I am now so compleatly happy,” whispered he tenderly, pressing my hand, “that I can find no room for resentment. My heart is incapable of any sentiments but those of love and rapture. Even you, my Sophia, for my sake must pardon the penitent, the reformed Lord G——. He is now become the best husband in the world.”

“You must,” returned I, with an affectionate smile, “allow me to make one exception. For the worthy Lady G——’s sake, I wish he may be the

“second

"*second best*, but the *best in the world* is
 "reserved for the grateful, the happy
 "Sophia."

He thanked me for this compliment by a look far more expressive than the most eloquent language.

Before the end of the play his Lordship gained so much courage as to speak to me. He implored my pardon.—I begged he would not recall disagreeable scenes to my memory, and assured him he was forgiven.—He expressed his gratitude—I changed the subject, and addressed myself to his lady, who congratulated me in the most friendly manner, on my reverse of fortune, and in a whisper told me, that to heaven and me she owed her husband's reformation.

"He

“He is now,” added she, “all my
“fond heart can wish.”

“Long, long may he continue so,”
said I, pressing her hand.

Since that time, my dear Lady Grace,
this amiable woman and I have lived on
the most intimate and friendly terms.
Lord G— has, at last, gained the ma-
stery over his passions, and is now
every way worthy of esteem. I have
also had the happiness of renewing my
acquaintance with Mr. Osgood. Lord
Edmond is very fond of him; and, what
you will, perhaps, smile at, the former
is become very fond of my cousin, who
is, indeed, a most engaging creature.
He has not yet, however, been able to
prevail on her to lay aside her weeds;
but as they are both of a sentimental turn,
they

they amuse themselves by indulging, for each other, a pure platonic passion.

About six months after my return to England, my happiness was rendered still more perfect by the addition of your valued friendship. I loved you, dear Lady Grace, from the first moment I beheld you; nor was you less prepossessed in my favour. I love you still, notwithstanding you tell me you are become my rival; that you envy me so charming a husband as Lord Edmond; that you will never change your state, till you can find one every way like him, accomplished in person and mind. Soon may that distinguished mortal appear, who is doomed to conquer your insensibility. I long to have you keep me in countenance. You
say

say I am happy; why then do you not make haste to follow my example?—Yes, my friend, I am indeed supremely so: happy to the utmost extent of my wishes.—“How can you be otherwise,” you cry, “with so charming a fellow as Lord Edmond?”

What say you to Mr. Durant? I am told he is on his way to England. I have a kind of presentiment that you will like him.—Don’t put up your pretty lip.—Or what do you think of the amiable colonel? He is here, at present, and raves about you. He has found out a strong resemblance between your picture and mine. I am much obliged to him for the compliment. Lord Edmond is of the same opinion. I have been trying to find out a likeness between

tween him and Edmond. These kind of agreeable follies amuse us in the country. Come and partake of them. I have fulfilled my promise, and now claim yours. Your company is impatiently expected. Lord Edmond joins in the request. He says he has a thousand things to communicate; that they are of vast importance. He longs to present to you his son and heir. He insists upon it that the dear little creature is his very picture. I tell him he pays himself a very high compliment.

How I trifle! My heart is so light, that I know not when to stop. Grief makes us much more sober, sensible creatures than joy. I will scribble no more. Come and let me chat to you in person.

Adieu,

F I N I S.

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